PUBLIC OPINION IN WAR AND PEACE

A. L. LOWELL

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PUBLIC OPINION IN WAR AND PEACE

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PUBLIC OPINION IN WAR AND PEACE

BY

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TO THE MEMORY
OF MY GUIDE, COUNSELLOR
AND FRIEND

VISCOUNT BRYCE

PREFACE

During a visit to England in the summer of 1920 the writer was much impressed by the political attitude of thoughtful people. Not only were the course of public affairs, the condition of Parliament and its relation to the cabinet much changed from what they had been before the war, but the tone of thought on the part of men not in active politics was different. There appeared to be a lack of aggressiveness, of confidence, of antagonism on questions of national policy, unusual in English-speaking countries. Criticism was present in abundance, but it was negative rather than constructive, helpless rather than combative in the main, unable to rally a considerable body of thought about a positive program. In short one found what is termed in the following pages an atrophy of public opinion. A natural curiosity was aroused to inquire into the reasons for such a condition, and its bearing upon the peculiar, but various, states of mind prevailing

in other nations that had taken part in the great struggle. Public opinion everywhere after the war flowed in unaccustomed channels; and, since light is often shed upon normal conditions by a study of the abnormal, it seemed that something might be learned about the nature of public opinion in ordinary times by observing its operation under the severe strains that accompany and follow a terrific war.

This suggested a fresh examination of the formation and expression of opinion, of its nature and limitations; and led to the hypotheses presented in this book. They are offered in the hope that, however insufficient, they may point to a method of approaching the subject that has been too little considered. In some places, and especially in describing the functions and the differing forms of political parties, views and illustrations presented in the writer's *Public Opinion and Popular Government* and earlier books have unavoidably been repeated, but this has been done only so far as is necessary to make the argument clear.

Since the following pages were sent to the printer Mr. Lloyd George has resigned, to be succeeded by another ministry under Mr. Bonar

Law, and a general parliamentary election has been set for November 15. The change has been brought about, like a similar event after the wars of Napoleon, by the breaking up of the group of men who dominated British politics. A century ago it was the Tories who split into two wings, and opened the gap for a Whig ministry and the revival of alternating party governments. Now it is a coalition that has been broken up by the withdrawing of Conservative members. In the present unsettled state of politics it would be rash to forecast the results in the coming election or in the following years. But it is not improbable that the ultimate effect will be, as before, a renewal in England of government by party; not necessarily of a single party in power and another in opposition, although this is the normal condition unless profound changes occur in the parliamentary system.

By the kind invitation of the Rice Institute at Houston, Texas, the substance of these chapters was delivered there as the *Godwin Lectures* in April last, but they were not then completed for publication. The writer is grateful for that opportunity to set forth these views, and for the encouragement it gave. His warm thanks are

due also to two friends and colleagues: to Professor James H. Ropes for reading and criticising the manuscript, and to Professor Henry A. Yeomans for the same kindly service with the proof-sheets.

A. Lawrence Lowell

Cambridge, October 30, 1922

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PUBLIC OPINION IN WAR AND PEACE

INTRODUCTION

The study of psychology is constantly throwing fresh light upon the working of the human mind. By its experimental and comparative methods it has revolutionized the line of approach to the questions with which it deals; and its devotees are quite right in asserting that no study of human thought, conduct, or training can be wisely undertaken without some familiarity with the principles it has evolved. Beginning with the simpler processes, closely related to the purely physiological reflex actions, psychology has sought, like all other branches of learning that deal with man, to extend its province over his whole nature and connections. It explains how and why he feels and thinks, the sources of his emotions and convictions, and of his actions and inhibitions. Among the more recent fields it has explored is that of social life, and under the name of social psychology it strives to explain in a scientific way the relations of men with one another; the behavior first of mobs and crowds

acting under the influence of simple, strong emotions; and then of more complex societies and groups of all kinds. In doing so it traces the evolution of communities from the early savage tribes in the forest to the most highly developed and civilized nations of the present day.

In pursuing these studies psychology enters the fields of other branches of knowledge, and therefore requires their aid. The anthropologist must furnish the information needed about the condition and conduct of barbarous peoples; the historian must expound the course of events in historic times, and the student of politics the phenomena of public life. Each of these men, even with an incomplete knowledge of the whole domain of psychology, can add to the science by contributing the facts and point of view revealed by the study of his own subject, provided he does not attempt to go too far outside his special field. He may lay stress upon a single principle, and thus point out its importance, if the reader does not suppose that he is striving to explain everything thereby; an effort that always appears to us overstrained when anyone else makes it.

The chosen field of the writer having been the nature and operation of political parties, which is

obviously included within the scope of recent social psychology, it has seemed to him that he might contribute something to the science by a discussion of the divergence of opinions that cause and maintain those parties. In doing so he makes no attempt to touch the problems of psychology now in dispute; such as the nature of instincts and the emotions arising therefrom; how far the cognitive, affective and conative functions may be changed by individual experience; the extent, if any, to which acquired mental traits are inherited; whether there is a group consciousness or not; and what are the qualities of the group mind. It is needless to discuss these questions here because they do not appear to affect the suggestions about the formation of opinion that he has to offer. This caveat is made because one is sometimes believed to imply more than one intends. In referring to an earlier book by the writer, *Public Opinion and Popular Government*, Professor McDougall criticised* the view there taken of public opinion as being simply the algebraic sum or balance of individual opinions. It is such a sum, so far as it is expressed at an election, which is a rough and inexact,

* *The Group Mind*, p. 270.

though necessary, method of ascertaining it. But, as stated elsewhere in the book, in the formation of public opinion individual opinions are weighed as well as counted. Professor McDougall appears to suppose that the writer fails to take account of the group mind, of its effect, and of the influence exerted upon public opinion by the ideas of men now dead. But that was not intended. These influences work through their effect on the minds of living individuals, and hence in considering proximate results one may fairly consider those minds alone without searching for the origin of their convictions further than is needed by the subject discussed, and without in any way committing oneself to the intellectualist and individualist point of view. A man who reaps a field, starts a bank or commits a murder may properly be said to do that thing, although some occult influences from his forebears or associates may have caused him to do it; and a man may be said to hold an opinion, although his ideas are not excogitated by himself, but flow from remote impulses of which he is quite unaware. Nor is it necessary to inquire into the source of his opinion if its only importance for the purpose in hand is the fact that he holds it. One is justified in not

going farther back into the origin of ideas than the immediate subject requires.

There is no doubt that the progress of psychology has sent the older intellectualist theory of human conduct to the scrap-heap, or perhaps only into the dry-dock for repairs and equipment with modern machinery for use in a limited capacity. In reading some recent discussions one would almost gather that human beings hold no opinions and perform no acts by means of reasoning faculties. But surely no one would seriously assert that the calculations of perturbations by Leverrier and Adams revealing the presence of Neptune, Darwin's inductions which led to his theory of natural selection, the strategy of Marshal Foch in the late war, the conclusions of a banker that the German mark would fall in value and thereby alter the rate of exchange, or the results obtained by a psychologist about the processes of the human mind, were due to instinctive emotion without intellectual reasoning. These have all been opinions, and opinions in which rational men might, and did in fact, differ. The processes were intellectual, resulting in opinions of a kind that may be acted upon, and determine conduct. No one will deny that in the

choice of means to attain a desired end men make use of their power to reason, and that in so reasoning they reach different conclusions. For the purpose of this book it is unimportant whether or not the whole motive power in the human mind resides in the primary instinctive emotions and the complex sentiments resulting therefrom, because in the choice, at least, of means to attain an end rational methods enter, often as the decisive factor, and it is with the formation of opinions where intellectual processes do enter that the book is mainly concerned.

There can, however, be no doubt that emotion and desire often influence the choice of means as well as of ends, and indeed it is impossible to distinguish sharply between means and ends. The extent of that influence is perhaps exaggerated by a recent group of writers. It may, therefore, be worth while to examine the process whereby emotion affects opinion, since the method of operation may indicate its limits, and throw light upon the whole question of the formation of opinion both in the individual and in collective groups of men. Without attempting to deny or belittle other agencies, it is suggested that emo-

tion works in large part through the direction of attention.

If it be true that man advances by overemphasis on one thing at a time, this is no less true of the study of man himself. That study has progressed by fixing attention on some quality of his nature, and exploring its effects to the comparative exclusion for the time of other qualities. One of the reasons for so doing is doubtless the extreme complexity of man's faculties. Physics is studied by isolating a single force, observing and measuring it separately, and then calculating its effect in combination with other like forces. This is possible because each force acts independently, and is not changed by the action of others, merely contributing its distinct propulsion to the combined result; but in human thought and action the parallelogram of forces does not apply, because each impulse modifies not only the combined result, but also, both in strength and direction, the other simple impulses with which it is combined. Fear and love are both strong impulses, but as motives to action they may together counteract each other and prevent the result that either alone would produce. A man and his wife are in the upper

story of a house that is on fire, with a single plank leading to another house. The plank is already catching fire and may fall at any moment. If the wife were not there, so that the motive of love was not present, the man would rush across the plank at once. If the plank were not in a dangerous condition, so that fear was absent, he would at once cross it with his wife. But under the combined impulse of both love and fear he waits until she is safely over before he leaves the house. Even the American partridge with her brood will act in the same way. It is her natural impulse to fly from danger, and also to follow her young when they run away from her; but if one comes upon her suddenly and her brood flees, instead of chasing after them or flying off she runs slowly along in another direction, trailing her wings on the ground, until she has lured the object of peril to a safe distance from the brood. It would not be difficult to cite many instances where combined impulses in the same direction, instead of increasing, diminish the tendency to move in the line each of them would separately indicate. This makes the study of the effect on conduct of complex motives extremely difficult;

and the motives that actuate human conduct are usually complex.

Many years ago the writer, as a member of the bar, had a desire to be professionally employed, and as a member of the School Committee a desire to help any teacher claiming to be unjustly treated. One day a teacher came in with a grievance, and after stating it added that of course he should regard this as a matter of business. He was at once informed that an offer to pay a member of the School Committee for his services was fatal to his case. The motives to earn a fee and to defend a teacher, when presented together, caused a violent revulsion against both. Of course it may be said that it was not the combination of motives that produced a resultant contrary to the natural tendency of each acting alone, but that the combination of the two facts produced a third and stronger motive, that of fidelity to a public trust. This may be true, but for our purpose it comes to the same thing.

CHAPTER I

THE FORMATION OF PERSONAL OPINION

Inductive logic seeks to determine the true probational weight of the elements in the process of reasoning, with a view of reaching a correct result. It aims to show men how they ought to reason, how they ought to marshal facts, so that if all men followed the principles laid down they would all agree either in the conclusion, or in the degree of uncertainty necessarily involved in the problem. The object of this book, on the contrary, is to inquire why people reach incorrect results — that is, why they reach different results with a sense in their minds, not of doubt, but of conviction — and the relation of those differences to the problem of popular government.

Opinions and Demonstrations

An opinion may be defined as the acceptance of one among two or more inconsistent views which are capable of being accepted by a rational mind as true. If only one view can be logically ac-

cepted it is not an opinion, but the result of a demonstration. This is true of propositions in mathematics, where if certain axioms, universally admitted, be assumed the result follows inevitably. In such cases there is no possibility of a difference of opinion, and hence we do not speak of having an opinion about the proposition that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles, but of proving it. The same is true of all deductive, that is purely logical, reasoning from premises that are admitted. Many facts also are proved inductively by such a preponderance of evidence that, while they are not inevitably deduced from accepted premises, no one thinks of questioning them. The law of gravitation is such a fact in the physical world; so in geography is the existence of the continent of Australia, and so in history is the murder of Julius Caesar. Things like this we call facts, saying that, whatever they may once have been, they are no longer matters of opinion, and anyone who doubts them proves thereby that he is not of sound mind.

An opinion, therefore, involves a choice, conscious or not, between differing views which may be rationally held, and hence on questions

where rational men may differ. The word choice is, perhaps, misleading, for it seems to imply a deliberate preference for one alternative over another; whereas the person said to make it may be in such a condition, due to his own lack of knowledge or to his environment, that he is quite unaware of any possible alternative. This is the condition in primitive societies so far as the general conduct of life is concerned, and it is true of many of the ideas that govern life today. The word choice is used here to mean that some other opinion could be rationally held, without implying that the person holding it was actually in a position to make a choice between them. That is the reason for saying that it may be conscious or unconscious. So used the term is logical, and it is convenient for our purpose because the main object of this book is to consider how opinions are formed where there is a conscious choice between possible conclusions evident to the mind of the person who makes it.

Although an opinion is a view that can be rationally held, all opinions are not acquired by a process of reasoning. Everyone accepts many of his ideas, not on grounds of their rational probability but because he received them from

others, perhaps in early infancy. Probably everyone holds in this way the vast majority of what he takes to be his opinions. These ideas emanate from men who believed them, often had good grounds for holding them and according to the knowledge they possessed were rational in so doing; while the recipient had an opinion, or at least a blind reliance, on the credibility of the source from which they came. In any case we may for practical purposes use the term opinion for any one of two or more divergent views that can be entertained by rational men, without regard to the process by which the particular holder came to adopt it. We may assume, moreover, that any view accepted by a considerable number of men is an opinion that can be rationally held; and, indeed, not to assume this would render futile any discussion of the working of opinion in the actual conduct of human affairs.

Causes of Different Opinions

Let us consider first opinions that are consciously and rationally formed. It might be supposed that men of equal intelligence, without prejudice or bias, would on the same evidence reach the same conclusion; but this is by no means always

true. Two men read in the morning newspaper the account of a murder and the arrest of someone on suspicion. Neither of them has the slightest personal interest in the affair; but the same story read by both causes one of them to incline to the belief that the person arrested is guilty, and the other to think he is not. Two people read a detective novel, the art of which is, of course, to mislead. One suspects the real author of the crime before the other; he picks up the true scent while the other is still on the false trail. A man and his wife inspect a couple of boarding schools, of which they had previously known nothing, to select one of them for their son. They see everything together; but when they have finished he favors one, where he has been impressed by the way Latin was taught, while she prefers the other because of the great neatness of the rooms and the kindly manner of the principal's wife. Observe that in these instances the two persons have before them precisely the same evidence, and may be affected by no predisposition for or against either opinion. Such a complete absence of bias is uncommon, but in order to consider the cause of differences of opinion it is well to begin with cases where everything but a rational

ground of difference is, or is supposed to be, eliminated. Under these circumstances to what is the difference of opinion due?

Effect of Ascribing Weight

In the instance last given the father was chiefly impressed with the teaching of Latin, because he looked at the school principally from the standpoint of the education, the mental training, his boy would receive; whereas the mother was thinking more of the surroundings from the side of health and of morals. We say that they placed respectively greater emphasis on these different things, or in other words, in forming an opinion they ascribed to them a different weight. The same is true of the other instances; one reader of the story of crime in the newspaper lays greater weight on a piece of evidence tending to show guilt, the second more weight on some other fact that rendered guilt improbable. In short, when two reasonable, unprejudiced men reach different opinions on the same information, the divergence may be due to the weight they attach to different parts of the evidence or to other factors in the reasoning that bear upon the question. Let us take a simple case of weighing evidence.

The difference of opinion between two men may be due to a total rejection by one of them, or to a low estimate on his part, of certain evidence, because of what he deems a lack of credibility of the witness or inherent improbability; while the other man has no hesitation in accepting that evidence at its face value. A reward is offered for the detection and conviction of a burglar. A witness claiming the reward declares that he saw a certain man near the house at one o'clock in the morning. One policeman thinks the fact that the witness is seeking the reward and that, living at a distance, it is highly unlikely that he was nearby in the middle of the night, deprives his evidence of credit. Another thinks the witness has an honest appearance, tells a straight story, and therefore he sees no sufficient reason for not believing him. The divergence may, on the other hand, be due to a difference in weight ascribed to a certain part of the evidence admitted by both men as accurate; that is, it may be due to the different weight attached to an admitted fact. A man accused of a crime flees the country immediately after the crime is committed. One man thinks this raises a very strong presumption of guilt; another thinks it may well be the result of

hysteria, or a mere coincidence due perhaps to quite other reasons, and is not to be taken very seriously into account.

These are examples of differences of opinion on the weight ascribed to evidence for or against a single occurrence, such as the commission of a crime. In public questions the issue is much more complex, and involves other factors far less simple. Yet in that case also we can observe the same principle of a divergence due to difference of weight. In the popular arguments upon the tariff, one side is apt to assert that protective duties increase home production without greatly increasing prices, and the other that free-trade, without seriously affecting domestic industry, reduces the cost of living and producing. But in fact one side lays the chief stress, or weight, on how things can be sold, and the other on how they can be bought; just as in the case of the boarding school the father laid stress or weight upon education, the mother on a good environment. For our purpose it is not necessary to assert that all divergencies of opinion result from attaching a different weight to evidence, or to the various factors in a problem, but only that in large part they are due to this cause. The persons

themselves are not always conscious of their own mental processes; and the barrenness of many a discussion comes from the fact that it does not touch the essential point on which the disputants really differ; that is, the point to which they attach varying weights. In such a case the divergence may arise from what Mr. Kipling calls an error in the fourth dimension, something which one side assumes, but which the other wholly ignores. Everyone has heard disputes where the parties did not join issue, because neither thought clearly enough to perceive that some fact or idea which was to one the real basis of opinion, was by the other unknown, disbelieved, or disregarded. Sir Henry Maine relates the attempt of an Englishman to persuade a Hindu of the truth of the doctrine that the measure of right action by a government is the greatest good of the greatest number. After the discussion had proceeded in a futile way for some time it appeared that the Englishman assumed that all men counted equally, while the Hindu believed that a Brahmin was entitled to twenty times as much happiness as other people.

Effect of Attention in Ascribing Weight

One of the reasons that two honest men attach different weight to the various factors in a problem lies in the degree in which their attention is directed to them. Psychologists have devoted much thought to the subject of attention. They have studied its mechanism, the way it can be aroused, its effect on perception, its duration and the difference between attention to outer objects which attract it and to purely intellectual thoughts. They have discussed how far, if at all, it is the result of a voluntary effort of the will, or whether it is simply an automatic effect of a stimulus. It is unnecessary to consider such questions here, for we are concerned only with the practical effect of attention on the formation of opinion, and this is a matter that comes under common observation. An illustration may help to make the point clear. At a council of war one officer urges an attack upon the enemy's weak left-flank, seeing clearly that if successful the whole opposing line may be rolled up and a decisive victory won. Another officer points out that if it fails the movement will expose the at-

tacking force to destruction, and may well result in a disastrous retreat of the whole army. The first officer is an optimist whose attention is fixed on the advantages that may be obtained; the second a pessimist whose attention is directed to the harm that may ensue. Each recognizes the importance of both points of view, but each attaches most weight to the arguments which appeal to his imagination, on which his thoughts dwell, in short on which his attention is fixed. This happens even where all the factors in a problem are known to both men. But it is far more common when the same evidence and arguments are not present in the minds of both, and such a condition may occur simply because each looks at, and looks for, the facts and reasons to which his attention points, perceiving little, if at all, those to which his mind is not directed.

As a rule men see what they look for, and observe the things they expect to see. The extent to which this is true may be shown in modern landscape painting. Since Monet and his followers produced a new conception of color in nature artists have been rendering lights and shadows in much brighter tints than formerly. The insensitive multitude may call this the result of fashion,

but the artist is indignant at the suggestion that he exaggerates the color for any such reason, and insists that he paints nature exactly as he sees it; that to do otherwise would be false to himself and his art. Yet had he lived at the time of the Barbizon school his portrayal of nature would have had a very different tone of color. The artists of that day painted what they saw as much as their successors in the present generation, and neither nature nor the human eye has changed in the interval. Men of that period and this have looked at the same thing and seen it differently. It is a case of having the attention drawn predominantly to one or another quality of an object. If such a difference can exist in the impression made by a visible material object, how much more by intangible facts or ideas which must receive their form in the minds of different persons before they give rise to a definite conception; and how great must be the effect of fixing the attention on one point rather than another.

In drawing general conclusions from a large number of instances, cursorily observed without the use of statistics, people are apt to be misled by having their attention drawn forcibly to particular cases which they take to be typical but

which are in fact exceptional. When the writer compiled, a score of years ago, statistics about the relation at Harvard University between the rank attained by students while in college and subsequently in the professional schools, a colleague remarked that while the statistics were all very well he had known so many cases of men who had ranked low in college and high in the Law School that he could not accept the results. The writer asked him to mention any case of the kind in addition to the one instance he had found in a period of twenty years. The answer was, "That is the man I was thinking of." "Name any other." Another name was mentioned, but on reference to the statistics it appeared that, although this man had doubtless done better than his college record would have given reason to expect, he had not graduated from the Law School with honors. Being asked for more examples the colleague was, and has ever since remained, silent. Now the striking thing about this occurrence was that the attention of the colleague had been attracted to the single case he had observed rightly, and to a second case where he had not been quite accurate, not because these instances were typical, but because the

careers of these students were unexpected, or, in other words, because they were exceptional. Attention was drawn to unusual happenings because they were unusual, and then the attention was occupied by them so exclusively that they came to be regarded as normal.

Probably many popular superstitions arise from giving heed only to coincidences, and neglecting to observe the many more numerous instances where the coincidence does not occur. The man who believes that the weather changes with the phases of the moon observes the cases where this happens, and not those where the weather changes at other times. In countries where a belief in the Evil Eye prevails superstitious people notice any misfortune that happens when the possessor of the sinister influence is present, and each case noted strengthens the belief and sharpens the attention. By constant observation, so limited, it is possible to bring a strong array of evidence of this kind against anyone. Attention is not directed to such things unless suspicion has been aroused, and then the inevitable coincidences confirm both the particular suspicion and the general belief in the evil power.

The art of persuasion consists largely in directing attention to those aspects of a subject that will influence the mind of the person to be persuaded. This will be referred to again in dealing with changes of opinion. The same principle affects to a great extent the art of success in life. A man who knows just what he wants and how he intends to get it is almost certain to prevail over those who do not know. It depends upon the ability to direct his own attention into the right channels. Nothing is more important for success in a profession or business than the ability to distinguish the essential from the less important factors in a problem, and that means the capacity to turn the attention upon the vital points and keep it fixed upon them. Napoleon made his first mark by pointing out on the map the place whose possession was the key to the capture of Toulon; and it was in no small part this quality that made him a great general. The quality is no less important in the trial of a case in court, in the diagnosis of an illness, in an industrial enterprise, and in true statesmanship. One of the objects, indeed, of education is to acquire the art of analyzing, and thereby sifting the essential things from a mass of facts. It consists in riveting the

attention upon the various elements involved, discriminating between them, examining the nature and probable effect of each separately, without being confused by the presence of the rest. It is a habit that can be acquired, and is the justification for the slow, but effective, method of teaching by problems to be solved, instead of the more rapid process of imparting principles already worked out.

American history furnishes examples to be followed and avoided. It was the ability to perceive and keep constantly in mind the essential factors in a situation that produced the Constitution of the United States when the country was drifting into discord and anarchy. The fixing of their attention by the framers of that instrument on the essential points in the problems that followed the Revolution contrasts markedly with the policy of Reconstruction after the Civil War. The essential point then should have been the rehabilitation of the South as an integral part of the Union on the basis of the abolition of slavery. But the leader who could fasten his mind on the question vital for the nation was gone, and owing to various causes, attention was directed instead to equality for the negro, and to the punishment,

by exclusion from political rights, of those who had taken part in the war for secession. The error of paying attention to the wrong thing was committed by both North and South: but the North had the power and hence the responsibility. The mistake, although not unnatural under the circumstances, entailed for half a century evils from which the nation has not yet wholly recovered.

It may be interesting to note in passing that the sense of responsibility is based largely upon directing attention to the consequences of a course of conduct. Most of the shortcomings in this respect are due less to a deliberate disregard of consequences, than to a failure to think them out. Few people intentionally act on the principle "after us the deluge," but many who ought to feel the intense weight of responsibility do not feel it as acutely as they should. This is one of the disadvantages of very short terms of public office; for short terms are apt to mean short views. The holders are prone to look at the immediate effects, whereas the ultimate results are far more important than the proximate ones. But men who will not experience in office, and hence will hardly be held responsible for, the more remote consequences of their policy, and who know

that any far-reaching plans they may form are likely to be frustrated by their successors, are not placed in a position favorable for looking far ahead. This is one of many reasons why the officers of industrial corporations in the United States, whose positions are permanent, have often had an advantage in contests with public officials holding their places for short periods. As in all other human problems that is a drawback to be set against countervailing advantages in the other scale of the balance. Certainly nothing is more important than fixing the attention of public servants upon their responsibility for the more distant consequences of their acts.

Changes of Opinion

A change of opinion usually takes place by diverting attention into a new channel, which has the effect of drawing a red herring across the trail. Lecky remarked that people do not disprove miracles; they outgrow them. In fact few opinions are changed by being disproved. Attention is turned to something fresh, and an opinion is formed thereon which proves to have an unsuspected inconsistency with older ideas, and eventually, cuckoo-like, expels those ideas.

Opinions have this in common with intrenchments that they offer an obstinate resistance to a frontal attack, but not to a turning movement. It is good strategy in an argument not to attempt to refute an idea that seems to be accepted by the persons to be convinced, but to advance a new one, get that in turn accepted and then show that it leads to a different conclusion from the old one. In legal phraseology, do not traverse where the odds are against you, but if possible confess and avoid. That is the process by which opinions once prevalent are superseded. Many of the discoveries of science have worked in this way. The laws of gravitation, of the conservation of matter and of energy, relegated to obscurity opinions that preceded them. The discovery of the circulation of the blood, and of the bacterial origin of diseases, rendered obsolete earlier medical theories by the simple process of superseding them.

The same process applies to changes of thought about human relations. For example, the modern psychology of suggestion in its protean forms has undermined the older philosophy of rationalism. But there is this difference: in physical science the inconsistency between old con-

ceptions and a recent discovery is soon perceived, whereas in the more complex relations of society a considerable time may elapse before it is fully realized. Contradictory ideas may, indeed, be long entertained together without a perception that they are inconsistent. Sir James Stephen, in his book on Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, pointed out that the first two of these principles were mutually inconsistent, and that liberty if complete would produce inequality perpetuating itself in a geometrical ratio. The book was unpopular, perhaps not less so by reason of the truth it contained. A century and a half ago progressive people cared more for liberty than for equality. Napoleon declared the meaning of the French Revolution to be that careers should be open to talent, in other words that there should be inequality based upon differences in natural ability. But in these latter days the desire for equality seems to have been pushing the passion for liberty into the background. The doctrine of *laissez-faire* was undermined, not by being refuted but by the prominence of grievances and abuses that called for interference by statute; and when these grew more frequent it became impossible to maintain the principle as an abso-

lute doctrine. Even liberty itself has been found to mean inconsistent things. Men did not see that liberty of combination, if carried too far, was incompatible with individual liberty, and are now seeking where the best limits of the two may be found. Such light as can be obtained on the experiments of the Bolsheviki in Russia — the most fundamental attempt ever yet made by a nation to reconstruct human society — seems to show that they began by wholly discarding liberty in favor of equality; that is economic or social, not political, equality, for their theory seems to have been that until all people have been placed in the position of workingmen, those who are outside that class cannot safely be allowed political equality or, indeed, political rights at all. They appear to have soon found that in the imperfect condition of human nature an exception to the principle of equality must be made in favor of the peasants who must be allowed to own land; then in favor of the managers of industries and the experts, to whom it was expedient to pay in money or perquisites higher salaries than to the ordinary workman. Finally as prosperity did not come they reëstablished a measure of liberty in the form of permitting the

conduct of industries on private account. This is referred to here, not because of the lack of success of those experiments, but to illustrate how the idea, popular at the time of the French Revolution, that liberty and equality were correlatives of a single doctrine, has disappeared with the attempt to carry either of them to its logical result.

Another process by which opinions change is by making exceptions to general rules until the rule itself is broken down. This is good if the rule ought to be upset; but it has its dangers. An exceptional case, especially if it touches an emotion, often appeals with peculiar force even to people who are strongly in favor of maintaining the general principle. Lord Mansfield remarked that hard cases make bad law; and if this is true of judges, whose work consists of applying principles of law to particular cases, how much more of people who do not habitually consider special cases from the standpoint of general rules, and who do not appreciate the effect of precedent in making or marring principles of action. Herein lies one of the objections to the recall of judicial decisions on constitutional questions suggested in America. Most people would probably be far

more influenced by the aspect of the particular case, by the apparent merits of the parties to the litigation, than by the importance of the principle of law involved.

In private life an honorable man feels the need of guiding his own conduct by general principles of action, and of making exceptions thereto only when he can give himself a good reason, not inconsistent with the maintenance of those principles. It is by exceptions that moral standards are commonly broken down. The choice between good and evil conduct is rarely presented to a man in the form of a definite, clear alternative. If it were, the choice of the good would be much easier than it actually is, and men would be better than they are. The choice is usually between following a general principle and making an exception, which at the time does not seem very serious, and has much to be said in its favor. The danger to moral character is far less in deliberate preference for wrongdoing than in yielding to plausible excuses for trangressions of good habits, each small in itself, until the moral standards are gradually undermined. The way to avoid slipping downward is to have a standard and constantly compare one's conduct there-

with. To be unwilling to reconsider standards is the attitude of a pedant. To change them, or fail to strive to act up to them, without careful consideration, is perilous. To apply this to public affairs, questions brought before the citizens should so far as possible be confined to general principles, and not their particular application.

A little reflection will show that the breaking down of a general rule by making exceptions to it is wrought through a change of the object of attention. Instead of thinking about the rule, and its fundamental importance in sustaining moral character or in promoting the general welfare, attention is directed to the inducements for the particular act, or in public matters to the suffering, or injustice, caused to the individual affected; and in contemplating this the wider question is lost from sight or disregarded. Everyone must have felt the difficulty of insisting upon a principle, however essential, in the face of an appeal to personal sympathy. Lincoln's alleged remark, in pardoning a deserter, that he did not see how shooting him would do him any good, appeals to our feelings of humanity, but it can hardly have failed to encourage the enormous number of desertions in the Civil War. Most

changes of opinion due to the introduction of a novel idea may be traced to the directing of attention to an entirely new line of thought that becomes deeply fixed in the mind, and gradually expels the old one which falls first into neglect and then into disrepute. It is notable that when people are confronted by a condition where their principles cannot be applied, disliking to yield their former convictions, they often strive to reconcile the old and the new, sometimes by sophisms or by strained constructions, rather than admit that their opinions were inaccurate. This occurs particularly when principles they had regarded as absolute prove to be true only within certain limits, cases falling within those limits having previously been alone subject to their attention.

Where a change of opinion occurs by a diversion of attention into a new channel some people hail it as a regeneration of mankind, while others see in it a fatal decline from a better state. Yet neither of them is justified. The progress of man is like that of a sailing vessel beating to windward first on one tack and then on another. If it can make better than eight points it is going ahead all

the time, and it is well not to run too long on one tack. The modern world does not stay very long on one tack. Only in a stagnant nation, like old China, no change takes place. In the modern world discoveries and inventions are constantly provoking new ideas and habits, and change is inevitable. Hence the spirit of the age is always ephemeral. As soon as any opinion upon human relations has become generally accepted it is time to look for some new idea that is creeping in, and later will prove inconsistent therewith. The radical who in his youth is a man of his day, and who thinking himself a man of the future continues to assume that his precise views will prevail, is very likely in old age to be regarded as the relic of a past generation. Many a man sits on the back platform of the train, insisting that he is on the engine, and that the train is going backward. The world is moving at a rapid pace, whither it does not know; but in spite of the discouragements that follow a great war we may hope that, whatever the immediate course, it is making on its tacks better than eight points off the wind.

Effect of Emotion on Opinion

We have learned so much of late years about unconscious mental processes, about the effect of suggestion and the contagion of impressions, about how small a part of our ideas are rationally formed, that even philosophers sometimes tell us that all opinion is the result of emotion or desire, that we believe simply what we want to believe. But surely this is an exaggeration. Obviously emotion or desire does not control opinion where a purely logical process, hereinbefore called a demonstration, leads to a perfectly determinate conclusion. Men do not believe that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles because they want to, but because they cannot help it. A man may desire most earnestly that a column of figures shall show a certain result — that he is solvent, for example, or that his friend is honest — and yet no amount of desire will change his belief in the correct addition. There must be some element of uncertainty in the question on which his desire is to act; but this is, indeed, only saying that it must be a matter of opinion, as opinion has been previously defined. Even in a case where rational men may differ,

emotion or desire by no means always controls. A man often finds himself compelled to reach a conclusion upon the evidence which grieves him profoundly, although other honest and rational people with no stronger desire than he hold a different opinion. There is little need to cite examples of this, for every man has met with them in his own case or that of his friend. The people on a leaking ship doubtless desire to be saved, and desire to believe that they will be; yet that does not prevent their forming an opinion that the ship will probably sink within a few hours. The physician and the father, by the bedside of a child who is very ill, do not of necessity believe that it will recover however much they hope so. In fact a sanguine or foreboding tone of mind seems to have quite as much to do with the formation of opinion as emotion or desire. Common experience would seem to show that the stronger an emotion the more likely it is to affect opinion, and the weaker it is the more readily it will yield to contrary evidence. But if opinions were determined absolutely by emotion or desire it would make no difference how strong or how weak the desire might be so long as it remained the preponderating emotion.

It has become the fashion to attribute opinions too much to sentiments and desires. This is a natural reaction against the excessive rationalism of a century ago, but it has its practical dangers, for it is now common to appeal for many purposes to the emotion of the crowd, rather than to sound reasoning. The art of exciting enthusiasm by contagion has been carried to a high degree of perfection in America, and is used for objects of all sorts, from the nomination of the candidates at a political convention to the raising of money for a charity. In this last case it has given rise to something like a small professional body of specialists who have developed great skill in organizing a competitive zeal for giving more largely than people really want to give. To the mendicant orders of the present day — that is to people interested in charitable and educational institutions — the invention is priceless; but for political objects it is unfortunate. Man rises higher or less high according to the appeal that is made to him. If those to whom he looks for leadership appeal to his reason he will think; if they appeal only to his emotions these alone are likely to be stirred. There are great moral questions where a righteous sentiment ought to be

aroused, but the chief need of the present day in public affairs is clear, calm, profound and unprejudiced thought, and this the tendency to treat the mass of men as emotional rather than rational beings does not help to stimulate.

Emotion Works Largely by Ascribing Weight

Although desire or emotion is not conclusive upon opinion it has certainly a very strong effect upon it with people whose temperaments are not peculiarly judicial. In fact it would be safe to say that it affects the opinions of everyone to a greater or less extent. What is the process by which it acts upon the mind, where the mind acts at all and there is something more than a bare sentiment or prejudice, undisturbed by thought? What relation does it bear to the evidence and reasoning on which a conclusion is based, and how does that relation affect opinion? Let us take a case universally familiar. Someone is charged with misconduct, and the question turns upon the credibility of the accused and of those persons by whose testimony he is implicated. If there is a desire or emotion in the matter the credibility of a witness favoring that desire is

likely to be instinctively rated high, and that of a witness opposing it correspondingly low. A man is often heard to say that although the evidence of guilt seems very strong his confidence in the accused is such that he cannot believe him guilty. This means, not that the desire controls the opinion directly, but merely that the presumption of innocence from a reliance on the character of the accused is too great to be overcome by the evidence of the witnesses to the contrary; and the friend of the accused thereupon seeks in his mind for grounds to believe that the veracity or accuracy of those witnesses is not above suspicion. All this may be, and often is, done without a deliberate or even conscious intent. The friend does not say to himself: "The witnesses against the accused have doubtless told the truth, and were accurate in their report of the matter. What they relate is more entitled to credence than what the accused asserts. Nevertheless I wish to believe, and therefore do believe, his statement and not theirs." Nor is there any reason to suppose that such a process goes on unconsciously in his mind. When two honest men in a case like this reach opposite conclusions, and discuss them, the argument brings out just such a difference about

credibility as has been described, and there is no ground for assuming that this does not really reflect their actual mental processes. The case is one where a desire affects the degree of credit to be given to conflicting evidence. In short where a desire is present it affects the opinion to some extent by ascribing a greater or less weight to evidence than would happen if there were no desire. If this is done in the case of each witness, or piece of evidence, in succession the emotion or prejudice will clearly have an important influence upon the opinion reached; and the same principle applies to all reasoning which, not being purely logical and therefore absolutely conclusive, consists of balancing factors tending to render the conclusion probable. Wherever the result depends upon the weight of evidence those factors which confirm the result desired are likely to be given greater relative weight than those which oppose it.

So far we have been assuming that there is a real effort to form a personal opinion upon evidence and reasoning. How about the great body of opinions which people do not form themselves, but receive ready made from others without personal examination? Opinions or ideas received

purely on suggestion or authority, without consciousness of any possible alternative, in infancy, for example, or in primitive stages of civilization, can hardly be said to be adopted on account of an emotion or desire in their favor. If such a sentiment is present at all it is in the form of a desire to agree with the person or body from whom the idea comes, not from any distinct preference or desire for the idea in itself. But since no alternative is practically possible the influence of any such sentiment upon the result is unimportant. When, on the other hand, a person is conscious of an alternative, and yet receives an opinion from others without examination, its acceptance is often due to a desire, albeit unconscious, to agree with those who present it, or with the general trend of thought which they represent, as against the rival opinion held by different people. The opinion is accepted on faith, under the influence of desire. If we regard views of this kind as opinions, and in accord with the common use of the term it is convenient to class them in that way, we may fairly say that they are accepted in consequence of the weight ascribed to the credibility of the persons from whom they are received; and since there is no personal investiga-

tion of the evidence, and perhaps no further consideration whatever, there is nothing to counterbalance that weight.

The suggestion that emotion or desire works by attaching to factors in a question more or less weight than they would otherwise have is certainly true in some cases, and is probably an element, at least, in all cases. It is not necessary to assert that it is the only element, but it is certainly one that will account for much. The same thing is true in the case of any bias or prejudice, whether it proceeds from a conscious desire or not, and it explains why it is so hard to bring a man to change his mind after he has once made it up. The very opinion he holds is an opinion on the weight to be ascribed to the evidence. That with which he is already familiar has in his mind a fixed weight. To argue that it leads to a different conclusion from the one which he has reached is arguing that the scale which, as he is convinced, contains the heaviest weights ought to rise instead of falling, a conclusion which of course he cannot believe. What is more, any new evidence presented to him receives at once a judgment upon its weight from its relation to the opinion already formed. To take the same old

example already used; if he has become convinced that the accused is innocent he tends to ascribe less weight to fresh evidence of guilt than he would if the matter were in his mind still doubtful.

Effect of Emotion on Attention

If emotion or desire affects opinion by ascribing weight to certain factors in the question it would appear to do so to a great extent by directing attention to them. What has been said on the subject of the relation of attention to the weight of evidence applies here. The mother who strives to shield her child from the penalty for misconduct thinks a great deal about the child, and very little about the misconduct, and hence is inclined to think the punishment is unduly severe; whereas if some strange child had thrown a stone through her window she would be apt to think much less about the child and much more about the offense, with a different impression of the appropriate retribution. A politician, very anxious for reëlection, is in danger of thinking more about the effect of his action upon the voters than upon the destinies of the country; and what he thinks about will consciously or unconsciously

influence the weight he gives to the different considerations. That emotion or desire directs the attention, that we think of what we care for, is certain; and if it be true that attention governs the weight we attach to the various elements that go into the formation of opinion, it is obvious that a desire must affect opinion in this way. In considering how emotion or bias influences opinion we have assumed that the evidence is all present in the mind as it is supposed to be to a jury that is compelled to hear it. But emotion also determines in large measure what evidence shall be present, and therefore whether it shall have any weight or not. This is done also by directing the attention. To a great extent people hear what they want to hear and see what they want to see. They associate by preference with people who think as they do, enter freely into conversation with them, and avoid with others topics that are controversial, irritating or unpleasant. This is not less true of what they read. To most people that which runs counter to their ideas is disagreeable, and sought only from a sense of duty. In youth curiosity offers a counteracting attraction which diminishes in later life, and that is one reason why youth, which is often no less

dogmatic than age, is nevertheless more open to change of opinion.

But quite apart from conscious preference we notice and observe the things in which we are interested. Two men travel across the same region; one of them observes the progress of industry, the rotation of the crops and the standard of life of the people; the other is struck by the varieties of wild flowers, the forms of undulation of the landscape, the colors and the play of light and shade. A charity visitor going to see a patient in her last illness took with her a friend who, to her disappointment, was chiefly impressed by the beautiful old bedstead in which the poor woman was dying. Everyone knows that the man who collects wild flowers, or insects, or Indian arrow heads, can find them much more rapidly than his friend who does not care for them; and that when the friend becomes interested in the search he very soon discovers that, although he knows little about them, he finds them much more rapidly than he did before. The perception has been sharpened by stimulating the attention, and the attention has been stimulated by the desire to find. It is the same in everything. Desire arouses attention, and this renders perception

more acute for the class of thing desired. The boy who is not interested in Latin grammar or history, but in baseball, will pick up from every kind of channel information about the professional leagues, and display for their records a memory of which he seems wholly incapable in the case of irregular verbs or dates. If a few years later he happens to become interested in history, he shows a mastery of the subject which astonishes his friends as much as his knowledge of the scores in baseball did his parents.

Attention affects not only the class of thing perceived, but also the particular things observed within that class. The man who believes that people are inherently good sees goodness everywhere, while the misanthrope finds evil in abundance; for there is much of both to be seen. The optimist perceives the evidences of prosperity; the pessimist the signs of decay; not by deliberate intent, but because emotion or prejudice attunes the perceptions and directs the attention. One has only to talk with members of different political parties on the eve of an election to recognize how each of them, unless uncommonly cool-headed, sees with peculiar clearness the indications of victory for his side, with a comparative

dullness of vision for those that point the other way. It would appear, therefore, that emotion or bias produces its effect, in large part at least, not by a direct effect upon opinion, but indirectly by directing the attention, and by ascribing a greater or less weight to certain elements in the case which go to make up an opinion.

Never was the effect of emotion on opinion more strongly displayed than in the World War. There were horrors enough, but some tales were readily and generally believed for which it has since been shown that there was no foundation. Such were the statements that the Germans deliberately cut off the hands of Belgian children in order to mutilate them,* and it is worth while to examine the connection between emotion and belief or opinion in such a case. It may be observed that other tales, also improbable, were

* The English *Report of the Committee on Alleged German Outrages* (1915 Cd. 7894), gives no countenance to any such deliberate intent to maim children. Its remarks on the subject are as follows (p. 31): "A third form of mutilation, the cutting of one or both hands, is frequently said to have taken place. In some cases where this form of mutilation is alleged to have occurred it may be the consequence of a cavalry charge up a village street, hacking and slashing at everything in the way; in others the victim may possibly have held a weapon, in others the motive may have been the theft of rings."

accepted with no less readiness where emotion could have played no considerable part. The accounts of Russian soldiers being transported through England seem to have been almost universally believed there for a few days, until the government denied the fact. Yet there was no strong desire to believe them, and the report does not appear to have excited any marked feelings either of enthusiasm or disappointment. The evidence in this case, as in that of the Belgian children, was not of a kind that would have been accepted without hesitation in ordinary times. Men were in an excited state of mind, which does not conduce to a careful and impartial weighing of evidence. Moreover, the ordinary channels of information were in large part closed; people knew that they were not told all that was taking place; their habitual methods of reaching a conclusion about the public facts in which they were deeply interested were, therefore, inapplicable; and as always happens under such conditions they became very credulous, both in matters that stirred their emotions strongly and in others that did not.

If, assuming this state of credulity, we seek to analyze the cause of the ease of belief in un-

founded charges of atrocity, we find first that attention had been so exclusively and violently directed to the offences committed by the Germans that a low opinion of their character had been formed, which made crimes of all sorts appear not improbable. The popular way of putting this is that the hatred of the enemy caused the low opinion of his character; but it seems more accurate to say that the hatred and the low opinion were results of the same cause. Secondly, an opinion on the truth of any particular statement of atrocity was formed by balancing, consciously or unconsciously, the evidence pro and con, the inherent probability or otherwise being a very important weight in the scales. This weight having been already determined on the side of probability, the preponderance of the evidence was settled by assuming that, the enemy being untrustworthy, little or no weight was due to his denials, so that there was nothing in the mind to counterbalance any slight positive evidence. In other words, we find very nearly the mental condition produced by an uncontradicted statement of a probable fact, and in that case little confidence in the source is required to induce belief.

Effect of Interest on Opinion

To these suggestions about the way emotion works upon opinion it may be objected that they do not sufficiently account for the obvious effect of a pecuniary interest in a public question. A manufacturer believes that his business will be improved by a high tariff on the class of goods he produces; the Republican party is pledged to increase the tariff; he therefore votes for that party, and persuades himself that its success in the election will benefit the country as a whole. Let us analyze his mental processes. It is his interest and desire to improve his business. He does not form an opinion that it is his desire because it is his interest. Apart from the inhibition of some other motive the desire is primary, direct and obvious. Then as to his belief that a high tariff will improve his business, that opinion is formed like any other about the means to attain a conscious end. It is a cold calculation, as in the questions of what goods he shall make, and when he shall buy and sell. His opinion on these matters is affected, like all others, by many influences, rational and irrational, but not by his interest, for that is the very object he is seeking,

and the question for him is simply how he can best attain it. If a high tariff seemed likely to injure his business, his interest would prompt him just as strongly to oppose it. The same thing is true of the next step in the process. Having become convinced that a high tariff is for his interest, he considers which of the two parties is most likely to enact it. He does not conclude that the Republicans are in favor of a high tariff because it is his interest to have one. He knows it; they have said so, and he is again deliberately choosing the means to his end, that end being the promotion of his personal interest. So far we have assumed him to be acting from consciously selfish motives. When it comes to the last step, that of persuading himself that Republican success is for the benefit of the country as a whole, his interest undoubtedly affects his judgment; but if he is really persuaded and not a mere hypocrite, the effect would seem to be produced as in any other case where emotion, bias or prejudice influences opinion.

If the supposed manufacturer is perfectly conscious of the course of his own thought there is nothing mysterious in the way his interest has brought him to his conclusions, nor is there any-

thing exceptional about it. No doubt he is often not conscious of the steps. So far as he is aware, at any rate, he skips many of them, reaching the result somewhat blindly; yet the fact that the process is not wholly conscious does not change its essential nature. Not perceiving the process, however, we are inclined to attribute to the motive of self-interest a more direct psychological effect than it may in fact possess. Probably most cases where personal interest influences opinion could be analyzed in a similar way, and shown to depend on the same principles as a simple emotion or desire.

Impressions and Opinions

An off-hand impression differs from an opinion deliberately formed because it is not reached by weighing the evidence or arguments in the particular case. It is not the result of conscious thought, but comes at once on the presentation of the question. Yet impressions of this kind are highly important, for the conduct of life is based far more upon them than upon carefully reasoned opinions; and in elections and other public questions the great mass of men act upon them rather than upon opinions formed by conscious

effort. When an impression is formed instantly upon a new question there is not time for the weighing of conflicting considerations. The result would therefore appear to be due to a salient aspect of the matter presented, which has an affinity with something uppermost in the mind, and on which the attention is immediately fixed. This is frequently due to the existence of an emotion or prejudice, but by no means always so. When you ask advice of a friend and he replies, "I am sorry to say so, and I wish you had not asked me, but I think you are in the wrong," it is evident that the desire is not father to the thought. If a young man in time of war tells his mother he thinks of enlisting, she will probably reply at once either that she does, or does not, feel that he ought to do so, according as the fear of injury to him or the sense of patriotic duty is uppermost in her mind. In the latter case it may be contrary to emotion, or even desire, and she may burst into tears in saying that she had hoped he would not want to go, but that it is a sacrifice to which she cannot object.

An impression is often a more valuable way of obtaining advice than a request to form a deliberate opinion, since it shows how the question is

likely to strike other people who will have only impressions equally rapidly formed. Moreover, the immediate impression shows what aspect of the matter first attracts the attention of the person consulted, and thus what seems to him at the instant the most important feature in the case. It shows this with probable accuracy, and it is by no means insignificant, because it corresponds to the ideas and impulses that are habitually dominant in his mind, to which he instinctively gives the most weight; and if he is a normal person these are the ones that in the community to which he belongs are naturally, and in most cases properly, dominant. Whereas when he begins to reason about the question and tries to present to himself its different aspects, with the arguments for and against, he tends to give them a less unequal weight, his judgment becomes confused,

> And thus the native hue of resolution
> Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought.

That attitude is apt to continue until he has pondered the arguments maturely, and by a process of elimination has arrived at those which he finds most weighty. It often happens that in considering a matter the mind after wavering

between two views finally returns to the original impression as the best opinion. An off-hand judgment is, therefore, often better than one given after a little thought on the subject. But, of course, in asking advice in this way one must consult an unprejudiced person, or discount for prejudice.

An unconsidered impression may seem to mean little; yet it may mean much. An action upon a sudden impulse might be thought to mean little, but it is commonly regarded as a test of heroism, and rightly so, because it shows the motives, impulses and ideas that are dominant in a man. Two men see a child fall before an automobile; the immediate impulse of one of them is to rush in and save it, that of the other is to avoid the risk. The second may be capable of great heroism in a determined course of conduct, but the first proves himself a hero by his act, which is the result of character formed long before. Continued thought on a subject may cause instantaneous action in an emergency that has never actually occurred before. The writer had a friend who in boyhood amused himself by putting on at stations the hand-brake then used on railroad trains. He often thought what he should do if he

heard the emergency whistle for down-brakes. Years later when in a train he suddenly heard it, and the first thing of which he was conscious was standing on the platform of the car with the wheel in his hands and the brake already half on. The man who thinks heroic thoughts is likely when the occasion comes to do an heroic act; and the impulse to such an act does not arise contrary to the character a man possesses. It is the result of character formed by a long process of acts or thoughts, which have determined the habitual direction of attention, and the weight to be ascribed to different impulses. In this way an impression shows the ideas that are dominant in the mind. A man of the highest probity if suddenly asked for his advice upon the honest course to pursue in a difficult case will probably give the right answer at once, as we commonly say, instinctively. His first impression, like a carefully considered opinion, is the result, albeit unconscious, of weighing the factors in the question. The weighing, however, has been done previously. It has formed the tone of the mind, the attitude toward matters of the same general nature, the weight to be attached to certain general principles, and it has determined to what considera-

tions attention should above all be paid. The weighing is not the less real because at the moment the process is unconscious, nor is it necessarily less correct. Impressions, therefore, may be classed with opinions and deemed to depend upon the same general laws.

Opinion Easier if Alternatives Limited

An opinion being a choice, conscious or unconscious, between different views that can be rationally held, we may observe that the smaller the number of alternatives the less the difficulty of choice. This is clearly true in the case of a conscious or deliberate choice. If a man travelling along an unfamiliar road, to find a place whose exact situation he does not know, should come to a fork in the road he would have to decide only which of the two routes to take, and one or two simple facts might be enough to enable him to do so. He might, for example, be guided by the fact that his destination lay rather to the north than to the south; or he might observe that one of the roads was distinctly more used than the other, and this might aid him if he were aware that the place he sought was more or less populous than

other places in the neighborhood. If, on the other hand, there were three or four roads instead of two to choose from he would require more facts to determine his choice, which would accordingly be more difficult. The simple fact that the place he sought lay rather to the north than to the south would not be much help if two roads ran northerly and two farther to the south. Nor would the amount of travel upon them be a better guide, unless the place were an important centre and one road distinctly more travelled than any of the others. If again the road he was following should come suddenly to an end in a trackless wilderness, or in an open prairie with trails running out in all possible directions, the decision about the way to his unknown destination would be much harder still, and would require far more precise knowledge of the country. This is a fair illustration of forming an opinion on any question. In general the facility of forming it is inversely proportional to the number of alternatives between which the choice must be made; and, in fact, one may observe that in the case of several possible answers to a question the ordinary mental process is to eliminate those that seem the least reasonable, reduce them to

two and then choose between these. In the case of a single person this may not be a difficult proceeding; but when we come to the expression of opinion by a body of men we shall see later that the matter is far more complex, and liable to result in no true collective opinion at all.

The range of choice in individual opinion is actually limited in various ways. Few men are capable of the originality of thought of a Galileo, a Newton or a Darwin, or of a Hobbes, a Rousseau or a Bentham. They habitually form a new opinion consciously only when some question is presented to them for decision, usually in the form of a simple alternative, to do or refrain from a particular act. Moreover their field of choice is practically restricted by the traditions in which they have been brought up, and the habits of thought they have formed. In the main they do what they are accustomed to do, what they are expected to do and what other people are doing. A decision is ordinarily made only between obvious alternatives, or between following the beaten track and making a definite departure therefrom. The map of life rarely presents a road coming to an end in a trackless wilderness. Far more common is a fork where the

choice is between two paths. If it were not so, life would be impossible. If a man had to form afresh every morning opinions on a great many questions, or continually attempt to decide on his course between many alternatives he would accomplish nothing. He would starve while striving to make up his mind how to reap his grain.

Formation of Opinion and Trial by Jury

The foregoing principles about the formation of opinions are well illustrated in the trial by jury; for in no other institution has the process of making a decision by untrained men been under observation so long, and with such a careful study of the details involved. Judges have, indeed, been giving opinions since the dawn of history, but in civilized times they have been experts in a greater or less degree, and could be trusted to determine their own method of reaching a conclusion. But the jury is inexpert, and, in fact, that is the motive for its use. The jurymen are a sample of the general public, assembled because they represent the ordinary layman's way of looking at things, the common-sense point of view of the community at large; and for that

very reason their mental processes throw light on those of the ordinary men. Beginning as a group of witnesses summoned to give their testimony in the case, the jury developed during the course of English history into a body of twelve men empanelled to hear the evidence of others and decide upon that and that alone. Experience showed how liable they were to be confused or misled if the testimony presented to them were not carefully sifted; and hence from the seventeenth century onward rules of evidence developed which became more and more elaborate. No one believes that they are perfect; but, like all other human devices, they are an approximation to the right method of attaining an object, that object being the rendering of a correct decision where more than one opinion can be reasonably entertained. If only one opinion on the facts is reasonable, so that there can be no other rational opinion as hereinbefore defined, the judge takes the case from the jury and directs a verdict.

It is interesting to note how the centuries of experience with juries touch the various principles we have considered about the formation of opinion: and it is well to take these principles in

an order the reverse of that in which they have hitherto been considered.

In the first place the range of opinion is strictly limited, for it is confined to two alternatives. In a criminal case it is guilty or not guilty; in a civil case a verdict for the plaintiff or the defendant. Several issues are, no doubt, often submitted to the jury in the same trial, but the answer to each of them is only Yes or No. The chief exception to the rule of two alternatives is that of the amount of damages to be awarded, and the way this is frequently ascertained illustrates the very point we are considering. It is commonly done by adding together the estimates of the several jurors and dividing by twelve, and if so the result is not a true collective opinion but merely an arithmetical mean of individual opinions.

In the second place care is taken that the decision shall not be rendered on a part of the facts, but that the opinion shall be based on everything properly relevant to the question. This is done by making every member of the jury hear the whole evidence, the arguments on both sides and the judge's charge.

In the third place desire, bias and prejudice are, so far as possible, eliminated, by excluding

from the jury relatives of the parties to the suit together with persons in any way interested in the result, and by allowing a certain number of arbitrary challenges where bias is suspected but cannot be proved.

The Rules of Evidence

Fourthly, elaborate rules of evidence have been developed, designed mainly to prevent attention from being diverted to extraneous matters or to facts that are not likely to be given their proper weight. They relate both to the evidence admitted and the method of presenting it. The rules about the admission of evidence are aimed, first to save the jury from being confused, and even misled, by hearing facts that have no real bearing on the question at issue; and second to exclude evidence likely to affect the jury out of proportion to its true probative value. Of this last nature is evidence, for example, of the general character of a prisoner or defendant. To show that he has been a dishonest or cruel man has not much direct tendency to prove that he did the particular act charged, but may well induce the jury to find against him on wholly insufficient evidence that he actually committed

the act. In other words it may tend to produce prejudice rather than an impartial opinion. On the other hand evidence of reputation for lack of veracity may be used to discredit a witness, because one of the chief questions in his case is the proper weight to be given to his testimony. For a similar reason hearsay evidence is excluded, partly on the ground that the ordinary juryman, failing to appreciate its fallibility, will give it undue weight, and partly on the ground that there is no opportunity, by cross-examining the person who made the statements reported, to discover how much weight ought properly to be given to them. Cross-examination is, indeed, a highly effective means of ascertaining the weight that ought to be ascribed to the statements of a witness. An acute Japanese observer has remarked that, not the jury, but the art of cross-examination is the really notable contribution of the Common Law to the trial of cases.

The method of presenting evidence is also peculiar to the Common Law. The testimony of a witness is given only in answer to questions asked of him by counsel. Otherwise he might ramble on and make statements that are not admissible. In France the opposite plan is adopted,

and it is specially provided in the Code of Criminal Procedure that the witness shall tell his own story in his own way and shall not be interrupted until he has finished. Rules of evidence have not developed in France because the jury is a recent institution there, and the procedure used has been taken over from the trial before a bench of professional judges. By the Common Law method of question and answer it is possible to regulate the admission of evidence by objecting to a question before it is answered.

After the evidence has all been presented, counsel argue on each side, and they attempt to discredit evidence unfavorable to their own side, and give as much weight as they can to that which is in their favor. This last is done largely by dwelling upon it, that is by drawing attention to it. Thus the attention of the jury is directed, first by one side and then by the other, to every material point in the case, thereby avoiding so far as possible the danger of having the verdict result from fixing attention on facts bearing one way to the comparative neglect of those on the other side. Lastly, in order to insure that the verdict expresses an opinion on which reliance may be placed it must be unanimous; and here-

with is connected a device calculated to prevent jurymen from prematurely making up their minds, and thereby rendering a change of opinion difficult until a final agreement is reached or proves to be unattainable. That is the secrecy of deliberation. Until the jury are discharged their differences are unknown outside their own room, and hence a juryman has little of the pride of opinion which prevents change. When men consult in private and know that they are expected to agree, they are apt to express their views in a tentative way, to heed one another's opinions, to compromise and draw together until they do agree in their conclusions.

To use a modern expression the procedure of trial by jury is a case of applied psychology, worked out, not from a theory, but as the result of long and slow experimentation.

Summary

The suggestions made in this chapter may be briefly summarized as follows. An opinion has been defined as one of two or more possible views on which rational men may differ. Such opinions are adopted sometimes by a conscious choice between alternatives, but more often they are

simply accepted on authority. The reason that men differ is in large part, at least, to be found in the weight which they, consciously or unconsciously, attach to the different factors that go to make up an opinion; and that weight depends mainly upon the direction of their attention. It was then suggested that changes of opinion are largely due to a change in the point of attention. An attempt was made to show that the influence of emotion, bias, prejudice or interest on the formation of opinion can be explained to a great extent by its effect in ascribing weight to the factors favoring that emotion, and hence in directing attention to them. Impressions were considered, with their significance and their close relation to opinion. It was further shown that the ease of consciously forming an opinion is inversely proportional to the number of alternatives presented, the simplest case being that of choosing between two only; and finally it was pointed out how in the trial by jury and the rules of evidence a practical application of these principles has been reached.

CHAPTER II

COLLECTIVE OPINION

Suggestion and Imitation

Of late years the study of the influence of a mass of men upon the individuals of which it is composed has been actively pursued under the name of group psychology. Much that is valuable has been learned, but at times, it would seem, at the expense of some exaggeration. Among the agencies earliest recognized by which that influence was exerted were suggestion and imitation. More than a generation ago, when hypnotism was at its highwater mark, the effect of suggestion, both in abnormal states and under normal conditions, was carefully observed, and a great deal of valuable information was obtained. There can be no doubt that a great part of the actions of individuals and of groups is due to suggestions, coming often from sources of which they are not aware. Yet there was a tendency to attribute too much to this agency, to seek to explain human conduct too exclusively by that one cause, until

investigators began to discover its limits. It was found, for example, that even in hypnotic sleep suggestions would not ripen into action if wholly contrary to the character of the patient; that a good man or woman could not be made to steal or commit a crime of violence; in short that the suggestion to be effective must in general be in accord with, or at least not distinctly opposed to, the tendencies latent in the mind. Within the limits of its operation, however, suggestion is a highly potent force, and without taking account of it the behavior of groups of men cannot be understood. In the following pages an attempt is made to attribute much of the effect of suggestion to its influence in directing attention, and thereby thoughts and actions, into a definite channel.

Not far from the same time Gabriel Tarde and his school of thinkers pointed out the great importance of imitation in the gregarious life of both animals and men. In fact the tendency to imitate other creatures of the same species was classed among the instincts and treated as the cause of a large part of human conduct. Although the tendency is genuine, and explains much, there was again exaggeration in the extent of its influence. In criticising the example of a

flock of sheep, commonly used to demonstrate the force of imitation, Graham Wallas remarks that if a sheep, being bitten by a fly, scratches its ear with one foot, the sheep feeding beside it does not do the same, as it would if sheep had a general instinct to imitate each other's action.* At church in winter the writer has at times observed that during the sermon a cough by one person will be at once followed by a series of coughs from others; then silence for a while is succeeded by a single cough which again arouses a series of others. But he has never observed a similar phenomenon in summer. The single cough attracts the attention of people to a tickling in their own throats, as yet so slight that without the suggestion it would for the moment have passed unnoticed. They do not cough in summer because the coughing is not done from mere imitation, but only if there is already some inclination to cough, strengthened in its effect on the motor centres by directing attention thereto.

Professor McDougall in his analysis of the subject expresses the opinion that there is no specific instinct of imitation,† that imitative actions are

* *The Great Society*, pp. 123–124.

† *An Introduction to Social Psychology*, 12th ed., pp. 91–95.

of many kinds, issuing from mental processes of different types. Much of what is ordinarily ascribed to a simple tendency to imitate, he attributes to the stimulation of a natural instinctive emotion by the perception of a similar emotion in another member of a herd of animals or group of men. A deer seeing another show signs of fear becomes itself afraid and runs after its fellow, not from direct imitation of the action, but because its own emotion of fear being excited the act of escaping by flight naturally follows. He applies the same principle to human beings and says, "Sympathy is founded upon a special adaptation of the receptive side of each of the principal instinctive dispositions, an adaptation that renders each instinct capable of being excited on the perception of the bodily expressions of the excitement of the same instinct in other persons." It will probably be admitted today by almost all students of the psychology of groups that, in general, imitation or suggestion is not effective unless there is some existing disposition to the act or emotion in question. In a prayer meeting during a revival if one man ejaculates that he is a miserable sinner he is likely to be imitated by others, but if he should throw a hymn book at the minis-

ter he would not be imitated and might be molested. At a meeting of strikers, on the other hand, a cry from one of them that he is a miserable sinner would awake no similar expressions; but a stone hurled at an orator, who is trying to persuade them of their sins, would be liable to lead to a shower of stones from the crowd.

The Crowd and the Mob

Somewhat later Gustave LeBon turned a stream of popular thought on the study of the psychology of mobs and crowds; and it is certainly a most important subject, both in its scientific aspects, and in its practical application to society under conditions that provoke strong emotions without the inhibitions and restraints of social life in ordinary times. A distinction must, however, be drawn between different kinds of crowds, for they possess the characteristic qualities in very different degrees. We may distinguish in the first place what may be called simple crowds, a mass of people assembled by accident without any common purpose, or acting under an impulse quite unconnected with their motives for coming together. Such are the people in a crowded street when an earthquake takes place, or the audience

at a theatre when a fire breaks out. Under these conditions the crowd acts under a single contagious emotion. Quite different from this is a mob assembled for a more or less deliberate object, where a distinct and conscious common motive underlies and directs each momentary stimulus that sways them. Crowds, and especially mobs, of this kind are well worth careful study, and never more than in the present state of popular unrest throughout the world. Meteorologists have discovered that thunderstorms and cyclones usually occur to the southeast of an area of barometric depression, that is of an extensive storm centre. In such a region an atmospheric tension provides the conditions under which violent commotions are possible. In a similar way the strain of a great war causes in many places a general disturbance of mental and social equilibrium that prepares a field for outbursts of an emotional character. But crowds or mobs of this nature are not the subject we are concerned with here, for we are considering the formation of serious opinions, and that has a very limited connection with the conduct of masses acting under the impulse of violent temporary emotions.

Group Psychology

The science of psychology has expanded its field to deal with the sentiments and actions of groups of human beings under normal and highly civilized conditions — a study that includes the whole range of social life and social organization. The most comprehensive work on the subject is Professor McDougall's *The Group Mind.* Distinguishing from mere crowds and mobs highly organized groups, including nations, he insists that in such bodies there must be a group consciousness, a self-regarding sentiment in the group as such. To quote his words,* he says that a condition, " essential to any highly developed form of collective life, is that in the minds of the mass of the members of the group there shall be formed some adequate idea of the group, of its nature, composition, functions, and capacities, and of the relations of the individuals to the group." " The essence of collective volition is, then, not merely the direction of the wills of all to the same end, but the motivation of the wills of all members of a group by impulses awakened within the common sentiment for the whole

* Pp. 69, 77–78, 87.

of which they are the parts. It is the extension of the self-regarding sentiment of each member of the group to the group as a whole that binds the group together and renders it a collective individual capable of collective volition." And again, "This self-consciousness of the group is the essential condition of all higher group life." Such a conception of group nature no one, perhaps, would controvert. The fact that a number of people feel and think alike does not make them a group unless they are conscious of a community of sentiment, and therefore of belonging to a group so connected; and that consciousness affects profoundly their thoughts and actions. An association, barbarous or civilized, would be impossible, although all the members had the same traditions, habits and principles, unless each one knew that the rest had them and relied upon that knowledge. The members of the group interact on one another, and the consciousness of the group acts also. Indeed we may assume that the group thought or opinion is not a sum of independent personal ideas, but a complex result subtly combining factors of many kinds which would not exist, and would not be so combined, were it not for the fact of the group. Yet the

effect of the members of the group, and of the group itself, is upon the minds of living men. The dead have their effect also, by the ideas they have had and the traditions they have left behind. But here again their influence is upon the living men on whom those ideas and traditions have been impressed.

Let us take the smallest possible group. The writer, as the single trustee of the Lowell Institute, is by special statute a corporation sole. He is perfectly aware that he is much influenced in the conduct of the trust by the ideas and traditions of his predecessors; that he would act somewhat differently if he were the first incumbent of the office. This effect is not due, certainly not wholly due, to any sense of obligation to follow the precedents they have set, for he is perfectly ready to depart from them if he perceives a good reason for so doing. It is due partly to the natural tendency to pursue the beaten path of tradition, and partly to a vivid sense of corporate continuity. In short, so far as this trust is concerned, his self-regarding sentiment extends to it as a distinct entity, so that he has, or it has, a specific group consciousness or group mind. Yet at the present time there is no consciousness, no mind,

but his own; and the group quality thereof is due to the influence exerted upon it by the minds of others no longer living. If instead of a single trustee there were two, they would both be under the same influence of tradition, and would also affect one another. But all the influences of the group spirit would be exerted upon and through those two minds; and the same thing would be true of three, four, a dozen, hundreds or millions of men, the only difference being a greater complexity in the interactions and an increase in the sense of personal insignificance in comparison with the immense power of the group. Sir Martin Conway suggests * that twelve was taken as the number for a jury because it is the smallest that can act as a crowd. If by the term crowd he means only a number of unconnected persons brought together for a brief period, he may be right; but if he includes highly organized groups we may venture to disagree, and suggest that if he were King of England or Archbishop of Canterbury an introspection of his sentiments would reveal that he was a member of a group, reaching back into the past, of which he alone was living.

* *The Crowd in Peace and War*, pp. 22–23.

Admitting then what is claimed for the group mind, but remembering that its effect is produced by and through an influence upon the individual minds of living men, we may proceed to consider another point. It is said that ideas as such do not cause action, that the motive power comes from emotions or sentiments, and that groups are held together by these feelings. That may be quite true, and yet it is also true that a group cannot be held together long without an idea, without an intellectual conception of the reason for its existence. A crowd in a panic at a theatre fire dissolves as soon as it has escaped from the danger. No more accurate and concise description of a mob has ever been written than of that at Ephesus, where the cry "Great is Diana of the Ephesians" contained an idea too vague to hold the crowd together more than two hours. That a group may be lasting its members must not only feel that they form a group but know more or less definitely why they are a group. They must have an idea or opinion of the nature, the meaning and the object of the group, and this is the more true the more artificial the character of the group. A savage tribe encompassed by deadly foes may have only an indis-

tinct notion of the reason for cohesion, but a modern political party would speedily break up if its members had no idea of a common object. They may regard it as an instrument for promoting the general welfare, or as a mutual benefit society for distributing political and other favors among its members; but some idea of the motive for its maintenance they must have.* As this book deals with the formation of opinions, it is with the ideas, rather than the emotions or sentiments, underlying groups with which we are concerned.

One further caution. If in this book the opinion of a majority appears to be frequently used as synonymous with the opinion of the group itself, it is not on account of a confusion between the two, for they may in fact be quite different, but because for practical purposes in social and political life decisions often have to be made by voting, and on a vote the majority must prevail. A majority of those voting may not even repre-

* Sir Martin Conway seems to me wrong in saying (*The Crowd in Peace and War*, p. 77) that "political parties are not the incorporation of any reasoned set of opinions or political theories, but only a group of emotions. Views and theories can only reside in a brain, and that no crowd possesses." In this remark he seems to attribute to an organized group the characteristics of a fortuitous crowd actuated by simple emotions.

sent the larger number of those entitled to vote, still less the real opinion of the whole electorate. They may not even express truly their own opinions; but decision by majority vote is one of the general conventions of democratic government, and therefore when dealing with political questions we may for practical purposes treat the opinion of the majority as public opinion. The same thing is true also of all organized groups acting under normal conditions, when there is a difference of opinion that cannot be resolved by common accord, by interchange of views or compromise, but only by ascertaining which opinion shall prevail.

The Nature of Collective Opinion

It is customary to speak of the collective opinions of any body of men, and even of a whole people, as if they were precisely like the opinions of an individual, formed on the same principles and governed by the same laws. This is due to the habit of personifying such a body, of treating it as a single creature with a single mind. A number of men in close contact with one another do not think as they would if they were separated and had no communication with each other.

They affect each other's thoughts and feelings. Not possessing, however, a single brain, but as many brains as there are persons composing the group, they do not of necessity all think alike. The study of collective opinion differs from that of individual opinion by the condition that to serve any effective purpose, to secure joint action for example, it does not suffice that each person should have an opinion; it is essential that enough of those opinions should coincide to make joint action possible. For ordinary purposes, and among others for political objects, this means a very large part of the members of the body — according to the democratic theory a majority.

Unanimous Opinion

Two kinds of collective opinions may be distinguished, those which are unanimous and those which are not. As we have seen in the case of the jury, a small body of men may reach a unanimous opinion by consultation and compromise; or, like judges, and committees that work constantly together, by the habit of thinking along the same lines. But a multitude can hardly become unanimous by discussion. If they prove to be substantially all of the same mind it is rarely,

if ever, because the minority has been convinced, or a universally acceptable compromise rationally agreed upon, but because from the very moment the question was presented there was no considerable difference of opinion or sentiment. This is likely to occur only under two conditions. It may occur in a negative form when the question involves an overturn of those existing habits and traditions to which almost everyone is strongly attached. If, for example, someone should propose today to substitute for Sunday the tenth day of rest of the French revolutionary calendar, public opinion against it would be virtually unanimous. Such a negative unanimity has immense influence in maintaining the traditions of collective life; for it prevents those matters to which it applies from being made the subject of discussion or action. The other condition of substantial unanimity is positive and occurs when a multitude is moved by a violent emotion, such as fear or hatred; as in the case of a mob, a crowd in a panic, or a people at war. Under these conditions men may all think and act alike, and follow without question the direction of a leader in regard to the method of attaining their object. Such emotions are apt to be

of a very simple and primitive character, appealing to barbarous as well as to civilized people. Parkman pointed out in his *Conspiracy of Pontiac* how the Indian warriors, although subject to no discipline, would follow a chief in war so long as success seemed probable, but fell away when doubt of the result arose. They were unanimous while the enthusiasm, that is the emotion, raised by expectation of victory was strong, but ceased to be so when that spirit became weak. Even among civilized people the hope of success is often stronger, and more productive of unanimity, than the determination to persist in warding off calamity. Substantial unanimity in a multitude is a source of great strength, because its expression, by making everyone realize the absence of serious dissent, discourages any effort to form a contrary opinion, thus silencing latent opposition and enabling the whole community to throw its united force into the prosecution of an object. Its effect in war will be considered in Chapter V. Substantial unanimity about the main object of a group, and concerning by far the greater part of the actions of the members that relate to the life of the group, is essential to its existence; but unanimity in itself, whether in the negative or posi-

tive form, can rarely be said to decide any doubtful question, for its expression does as a rule little more than register an existing state of mind. The interesting question is how it comes to be unanimous.

The Growth of Collective Opinion

Public opinion may be formed in either of two ways. One of them is a gradual growth throughout the mass of the people, or the thinking part among them, of ideas that in the course of time come to direct thought and hence the march of affairs. This may eventually lead to unanimity, or it may not. The other is by the consideration of controversial questions that require immediate decision. They are controversial because opposing views upon them can be, and are in fact, rationally held by significant fractions of the community, and therefore no opinion upon them can be unanimous. In neither of these ways of forming public opinion is the psychology of crowds of much importance, for it deals in the main with gusts of emotion that rush with apparent unanimity through excited bodies of men, already in a mood to be susceptible to that emotion, and has only a limited bearing upon the formation of

sober public opinion in ordinary times. Even under the calmest conditions the contagion of sentiment, which is overmastering in passionate crowds, has no doubt a marked effect; nevertheless its influence is restricted. It is not usually the decisive element in the progress of those ideas that prevail against opposition; that is in the conflict between opinions each of which can be rationally held, and is in fact so held, by a significant part of the community. This is true whether the conflict is slow and prolonged, or comes in a form that calls for immediate decision.

Opinions that are formed by a gradual growth may in their incipient stages be of an abstract nature, having no immediate connection with current questions, or with politics; and yet when they become generally prevalent they may exert a controlling influence thereon. This is a type of ideas already referred to in considering the effect of attention upon individual opinion. In fact such ideas often begin with individual thinkers as philosophic or ethical principles, and slowly spread through other thinkers until they leaven the whole mass of popular thought. Of such a nature were Rousseau's theory of democracy and Bentham's principle of utility. The growth in

America of the belief in universal compulsory education shows how an idea may be diffused until it becomes practically unanimous, without being in itself the subject of active controversy. Educational discussions there have been almost wholly upon the method of application, the principle itself making its way slowly, and almost without direct opposition, to a position of general acceptance. The negro question in the United States, since the Civil War, although far less placid in its career, furnishes another illustration of the progress of an idea. Quite apart from the political issue, and in fact mainly after the issue ceased to be acute, the people of the North slowly made up their minds that the policy of Reconstruction after the War was wrong, that they did not understand the race question in the South, and had better not interfere with what they did not comprehend. This has been due in the main, not to the leadership of statesmen, or to the discussion of questions requiring immediate decision, but to a gradual progress of political thought among men not in active politics, a progress with which everyone is familiar whose memory extends back forty years. Such a method of forming public opinion is in fact often more accurate

and more effective than a decision reached in direct political controversy, because the question is considered by itself, free from entanglement with other party issues which befog the judgment and may well be of more immediate importance in the popular mind.

In his recent notable book on *Public Opinion* Mr. Walter Lippmann points out that our ideas are based, not on actual facts, but on our conceptions of those facts, images never accurate which he calls stereotypes. He shows how the American theory of democracy was founded upon the conception of an association of simple rural communities, which was never actually the fact, and has become less near the facts with the growth of population. This is an important truth applicable to all collective opinions. They are based upon what men see, or think they see; upon their limited experience, or what they suppose to be their experience; and therefore such opinions are liable to change with a larger or more accurate experience. Stereotypes of this kind are a great convenience; they are labor-saving devices, for the effort of thinking, and especially the labor of ascertaining the facts, is saved by having a general formula that can be used in solving questions.

But all such formulas are merely approximations, not safely applicable beyond the limits within which they are fairly accurate. This is true of almost all abstract propositions in political and social life. The more nearly unanimous they are, the more useful, but also if inaccurate the more liable to mislead; and they are often retained and acted upon long after they have ceased to be anywhere near correct. Men make of them maxims, treat them as axioms, reverence them as dogmas, regard as impious anyone who doubts them; until under the pressure of wider experience, of contact with other facts, a new conviction arises and displaces the old one which is thereupon discredited as an ancient idol to which our ignorant ancestors burned incense. History is filled with examples of such ideas useful in their day, accurate enough to be the basis of action when they arose, and afterwards discarded; but rare and execrated was the man who ventured to question them even when they began to be unfitted to a changed environment. Rightly so in part, because the man who strove to overthrow the idol tore down, like Voltaire, what was true with what was false; or, like Rousseau, set up in its place another idol which, although more suited to

the time, was after all an idol fashioned in the same imperfect way.

As an example of an imperfect stereotype Mr. Lippmann cites the American doctrine of democracy with its idea of the normal citizen, public spirited, intelligent and omniscient. Another illustration is given by the doctrine of the classical political economists, based upon the conception of the economic man, coldly pursuing his own highest interest with unfailing certainty of both end and means, and by a conglomeration of universal selfishness producing a highly moral world. Allusion has already been made to the way that conception was undermined and overthrown. The world is full of such inaccurate general assumptions today. In fact so long as man is not omniscient he can advance in no other way than by a series of approximations; and he habitually does so, not so much by refining his approximation to make it more nearly consonant with the facts, as by substituting an entirely new theory which comes nearer to them, often erring upon the other side. The task of thinkers lies therefore quite as much in discovering the precise amount of error in prevailing stereotypes, as in inventing new ones themselves inaccurate.

Opinions formed by the consideration of controversial questions that require immediate decision are to a great extent different in their nature and in the methods by which they are brought about. They are much more concrete, often turning upon the application to particular facts of principles universally admitted. In public affairs such questions are termed political issues, although they are by no means confined to politics. Here the opinion is formed by a more or less conscious choice between alternatives presented for consideration. This is the ordinary course of political controversy that is controlled by public opinion, and together with the perversions due to emotional conditions, it is the next subject to be considered here. The two kinds of opinion may be compared to the result of the attractions of the sun and the moon upon the earth. Our orbit is determined almost entirely by the sun, the moon from its small size having comparatively little effect upon it. But the moon, in spite of its small mass, has, because it is near, a greater influence than the sun upon the tides; and thus the opinion formed upon a question requiring decision may have a more imme-

diate but less enduring result than one formed by a gradual growth.

Effect of Ascribing Weight

The same forces that determine the formation of opinion by individuals govern also the making of collective opinion, subject, however, to the different ways in which those forces are applied. As in the case of individuals, divergent rational opinions in a body of men depend upon the weight ascribed to the various factors that go to make up the opinions. There is, indeed, this difference, that the absence of a conscious rational process of forming an opinion is more notable in the case of a large body of men than in that of an individual. It is not greater but more obvious. Every man, as already stated, does most of his acts as a result of ideas whose grounds he has never investigated at all; and he could not get through the work of his daily life otherwise. But we take this for granted. We do not ask the man at breakfast why he takes fruit at the beginning of his meal in the American fashion, instead of at the end as the English do; nor are we astonished that he does not ask himself. Admiral Sims in his *Victory at Sea* relates how an Ameri-

can naval officer at Queenstown chaffed Admiral Bayly about it, suggesting that he ate his fruit last because William the Conqueror had done so. Yet the American officers did the opposite for a precisely similar reason. A man follows one practice or the other as he has been brought up, and as his parents did before him, without question, although it may make a serious difference in his digestion. If his physician told him to change, he would probably do so, relying upon the knowledge and wisdom of the practitioner who might have a mere fad on the subject. Most acts in life are done because men have been told how to do them, and we are neither astonished nor shocked that this should be the case. But we are grieved that in public affairs, at an election for example, so many people vote simply as they are told without personal inquiry into the merits of the question or of the candidates. One reason for this difference appears to be that in most of the acts of an individual he is quite unconscious that he is making a decision or acting upon an opinion. He does not realize that he makes a decision, or rather ignores a possible alternative, about his fruit every day at breakfast; whereas at an election the reality of the decision, and the need of a

right decision, is obvious. Yet it is hardly more possible for the ordinary man to form a careful personal opinion on the complex web of public questions, or in America on the large number of officers to be elected, than it is on a multitude of matters in his private life. In both he takes most of his opinions from others. In each case, however, his action is, consciously or unconsciously, the result of a decision or choice, caused by the weight that, deliberately or automatically, he attaches to tradition, to habit, to association, or to the advice of the leader or the group that he follows. It is a choice in the sense that he could act differently if he chose, and he would do so if he attached a different weight to the habits or guidance under which he acts.

The Influence of Leaders

The extent to which collective opinions on public affairs are in fact controlled by the influence of individual leaders, or of small oligarchic bodies, has been discussed, especially in the case of the socialist parties in Germany, by Prof. Robert Michels in his book on political parties. His proposition is that all political organizations, however democratic in form, are practically oli-

garchies directed by a few leading spirits. We are familiar with this fact in America. It is not less true of the parliamentary chiefs in England, the cabinet ministers on one side and, in normal times, the leaders of the opposition on the other. In France it is even more true, though less evident, that current policy is controlled by a few men. Both legislation and the support or dismissal of a cabinet depend there upon coalitions of groups whose chiefs are not leaders popularly chosen to represent a definite policy, but men whose immediate attitude on current questions is determined in the main after the legislature has met, a matter that will be more fully explained later in discussing the political conditions in France.

The weight ascribed to the advice of a leader is, perhaps, most clearly shown when he suddenly changes his policy. In such a case he will often carry with him a considerable number of people who followed his former lead, even although they are not wholly convinced of the wisdom of the change, because, if they suspect no unworthy personal motive on his part, they retain their confidence in him and believe that he must have very strong reasons for his altered views. Under

these conditions he is sometimes able to give effect to a policy which its former advocates had failed to put through. The most famous case is that of the repeal in England by Sir Robert Peel in 1846 of the duties on imported grain, known as the Corn Laws, duties which his own party had up to that time considered of the utmost importance for the protection of British agriculture. Recent examples are the following by the Social Democrats in Germany of their leaders in support of the government at the outbreak of the war in 1914, contrary to their long-cherished pacific tenets; and the bringing of the United States into the war by President Wilson a few months after he had been elected on the cry " He kept us out of war." In such a case the weight to be attached to the attitude of the leaders is usually balanced consciously against other considerations, save in the event of war, where factors come in that will be discussed hereafter.

The weight attached to the personal attitude of a leader is greatest where the followers are least in the habit of thinking for themselves, and hence we should expect it to be strongest among those who are not in the daily habit of making personal decisions, and weakest among scholars

and men of letters whose life-work consists in thinking out things for themselves, and in whom to dissent often passes for evidence of originality. There is, no doubt, always some mutual influence between leader and followers. The oft-told tale of the Frenchman in 1848 who was cautioned not to follow a mob to the barricades and replied, "I must follow them: I am their leader," is repeated because of the element of truth it contains. A leader must ask himself whether his followers will support him in the course he proposes to take, for, except in times of popular excitement, there are always some among them who are liable to break away from him because they give more weight to other considerations than to his influence. The point to be made clear is that whether an opinion is due to following a leader, or to a personal balancing of arguments, the result is due to the weight attached consciously or otherwise to the various factors that go to the formation of the opinion.

The Effect of Attention

Another difference between individual and collective opinion is brought out by the effect of attention. In the case of the individual we have only

to consider the results produced by the turning of his mind to a particular aspect of a question, or to some part of the evidence bearing upon it. A number of men, as already pointed out in discussing the causes for a divergence of opinions, are not only differently affected by the same evidence, but receive their information through different channels, and, of course, do not receive the same information. All the members of a jury are obliged to hear exactly the same witnesses and arguments, but on public questions all the voters never have the same evidence and arguments before them. The members of the Athenian assembly were, and those of a New England town meeting are today, in this respect in something the position of jurymen, but the citizens of a modern state who never come together in a meeting are not; and the larger the community, the more diversified the conditions, and the greater the number of daily papers in circulation, the less will the evidence presented to its members be identical. They read different newspapers, listen to different speakers and talk with different partisans. No doubt they all hear something on both sides, but they hear much more on one side

than the other, and that which they hear most has with them the greater weight.

One of the considerable reasons for the differences of opinion between workingmen and investors is due to this cause. We may admit that there is much positive intent to favor one class at the expense of the other; but much also must be attributed to the fact that the attention of workingmen is directed continually to the immediate conditions of labor, and that of investors to the profits of an enterprise and the rise and fall in the price of securities. The farther they are apart the less the attention of each is drawn to the facts that appeal to the other. Everyone is familiar with the disastrous results caused in Ireland by absentee landlords. Joint stock companies and industrial corporations have to some extent had a similar effect. Great as the work of these concerns has been in developing natural resources and increasing productiveness, it has drawn the owner and workman farther apart. The stock or bondholder is an absentee owner who watches the dividends and the stock market, regarding the enterprise as he might a mere natural growth, without having his attention directed to the thousands who toil to produce the results; while

they are thinking of their own lot, without attention to the fact that it is the amount earned in dividends that attracts investment by people far away in a great city, whose capital and confidence make the industry possible. The larger the capital stock, the more widely diffused its ownership, the more all this is true, with the result that never, perhaps, in the history of the world have the owner and the workman as classes been so far separated as they are today, with their attention so little drawn to the facts about which the other is thinking.

An illustration of the effect of directing attention to a single aspect of a question is furnished by the condition of Ireland during the year 1921. Anyone who heard only of the killing of police from ambush or in their beds would be almost certain to find his sympathy on the side of the English government. Anyone who heard only of the reprisals by the Black and Tans would be equally sure to sympathize with the Sinn Fein. Now, although nobody could be in precisely that position, the attention of many people was directed mainly to one or other of these occurrences. One felt this in conversation, for the same person usually talked of only one of them,

and when the other was mentioned defended it as a natural, if not excusable, consequence of the wrongs committed by the adversary. In all controversies the question who struck the first blow is a difficult one, because each side is acutely conscious of the provocation by the other. His attention is riveted on this rather than on his own conduct, and it is a singularly fair-minded participant who can see both sides, that is, who can direct his attention equally to both.

Political parties do much of their effective work by turning attention to the special aspects of a question that favor their own side, and thereby giving weight to it; neglecting or passing over lightly the contrary factors. When possible party orators in the United States tend to avoid a perfectly clear issue. That is the meaning of what James Russell Lowell called government by declamation, and it is the reason why political campaigns in America have not a greater influence in educating and enlightening the community. The true function of political parties should be to present definite issues for public decision, but they do so less than might be desired. Man acts only in part from reason, and it is by no means the object of politicians or politi-

cal parties to appeal solely to the rational side of his nature.

Much of the influence of the press is exerted by the same process of directing attention. Serious discussion of questions in editorials or leading articles seems to have, in America at least, less effect than it had seventy years ago, as compared with the news columns and even the headlines in the daily papers. A great part of the news is no doubt ineffectual so far as the formation of opinion is concerned, because the object is merely to create a temporary sensation that will sell the paper, and in that case the result may be evanescent. A man engaged in journalism once remarked to the writer that a certain subject of which they were talking would not interest the newspapers because it was not ephemeral. But in other matters of more continuing or recurrent popular interest an effect is produced not so much by distorting, as by coloring, the news, — coloring it, not by false statements, but by giving greater prominence to those things which conform to the paper's point of view. This is far from being wholly conscious. The editor is human, and takes more interest in the facts, or the statements of public men, that bear out his

own opinion than in those which oppose it. His attention is more drawn to them and he gives them greater weight in his own mind and in his daily columns. The reporters, also, who collect news for him at home, and his correspondents in other cities or in foreign lands, have their own ideas which affect their attention and color their reports. These are in general conformity with the policy of the paper, but are often more extreme, and there is a limit to the extent to which an editor can control or revise the news that a reporter or correspondent sends in.

Propaganda of any kind pursues this method deliberately. Its sole aim is to create an opinion or sentiment, and it is carried on mainly by bringing exclusively to the public notice certain favorable aspects of the subject. That would seem to be the reason why after a time it often defeats its own end. The attention of the public flags; men get tired of the repetition; they distrust statements which, however true, are not the whole truth, being obviously made for a purpose. If not fully convinced they are glad to hear the other side, and their attention turns readily in the opposite direction. There are two kinds of propaganda, — that which purports to be for the

benefit of the public to whom it is addressed, and that intended for the benefit of others. The former includes the activity of political parties, of political reformers and of philanthropic movements. This, if wisely used, may long endure and be effective. The second is the kind to which the last remarks chiefly apply, and unless so conducted as not to be obvious, it is likely to overreach itself. During and after the war propaganda was carried on in the United States by several foreign countries, and in almost every case it provoked in the end a reaction. Every politician knows that, even in the case of elections which naturally interest the whole people, public attention cannot be kept intently fixed for an indefinite period; and it is therefore a commonplace in politics that an electoral campaign must not begin too early, or a candidate for public office be put forward too long in advance.

Attention assists an individual as well as a cause. In a democracy it is of the utmost importance to an aspirant for political distinction to draw attention to himself. Above all he must be known. It is, of course, better for him to be known for good than for evil, but for political success even the latter is more helpful than not to

be known at all. His name and face must be familiar, and his appearance or manner must be so attractive, or still better so striking, that it will be remembered. The managers of a candidate for a great public office spread his likeness in the press and in shop windows as widely as possible; often relate anecdotes about him, especially of a domestic character; and describe his adventures and amusements, that people may feel that they know something about him and talk of him as if he were a personal acquaintance. Herein lies a disadvantage in the direct primary. A comparatively unknown man selected for office by a political convention becomes at once for that very reason a marked person, and if the selection is wisely made by those who are familiar with his merits he is not compelled to advertise himself to the same extent as if he were seeking nomination by a direct primary. In the latter case he must not only organize a private machine, but also seek to make himself conspicuous, a necessity not always agreeable to the best men. This must be set down in the balance of account between the convention and the direct primary. There is no doubt another and wholly different type of politician who neither seeks nor needs public atten-

tion. He wields vast power in America, although he is happily less common than in the past. The boss manipulates the political machinery behind the scenes, and desires rather to be inconspicuous than prominent. He is striving not for public office himself, but to control those who hold it, and that can be done more effectually if it is not too evident. For the man on the other hand who aspires to public office in a democratic electorate notoriety is of great value, and the quality of drawing attention to himself, which some men seem to possess by nature, is an immense advantage. Nor does it by any means necessarily imply objectionable traits.

Attention and the Group

Much of the behavior of a group of men, whether collected in an excited crowd, or each alone in a calm spirit, can, it would seem, be explained by the turning of their attention to an emotion, train of thought or course of conduct, to which they are already disposed, but which would not take definite shape without that direction of their attention. It is not necessary in a case of brutality by an excited crowd that everyone present, or indeed a majority of them, should be dis-

posed to commit acts of violence. Many of them may be simply overawed, and, although quite opposed to the act, may be deterred from objecting to it by not knowing whether they will receive any support, or by the feeling that resistance would certainly be useless and might entail personal injury. But a considerable number of them must be disposed to favor the act. Nor is it necessary that the disposition should be habitual to the members of the crowd at other times. Many years ago Wendell Phillips made an address which at the time carried off their feet a body of students who, as one of them expressed it, kicked themselves all the next week because they did not really agree with the ideas he had expressed. Nevertheless they would not have been enthusiastic at the time had he not touched a responsive chord. The orator had succeeded in riveting their attention on some aspect of his subject which appealed to a real disposition; in making that predominate; and in crowding out from attention for the moment other aspects that on reflection had for them much greater weight.

A member of any group, whether an emotional mob in the streets, an army marching to war, or a society striving peaceably to accomplish a reform,

obtains his impressions on the subject in which the group is interested in large measure through the group itself. His attention is directed to the object it is seeking to attain, and to the methods by which it hopes to do so. The mere fact that he is a member of the group not only opens channels of attention, but also closes others. The group insensibly builds an intellectual and emotional wall around him. In fact one observes how much the members of a group are heard to refer to the same facts and recite the same arguments. One observes also when a man separates himself from a group how rapidly his point of view changes. A cabinet minister in England who resigns on account of some specific disagreement with his colleagues, professing in other respects his sympathy with their general policy, is apt before long to drift into the parliamentary opposition. This was true of the greater part of the Liberal Unionists who left the Liberal party when Gladstone introduced the first Home Rule Bill. It was true earlier of the followers of Sir Robert Peel who broke with the rest of the Conservatives over the repeal of the Corn Laws. The last mentioned case was not, indeed, one of resigning from a ministry, for the cabinet itself departed from the

traditions of the party; but the principle is the same, that separation from a group tends to produce a gap wider than its original cause. Part of the growing divergence may be due, no doubt, to the friction incident to a wrenching of former ties, but that is not the sole source of the change of attitude. Something must be ascribed to the alteration in the channels of attention.

National Groups and Personal Religion

How the attitude of mind may be changed by the breaking up of a group, through a new focusing of attention, can be seen in the history of those religions that have influenced the course of European thought. In the ancient world, so long as a strong public spirit prevailed in independent states, the citizens, or at least the ruling class among them, taking an active part in, and feeling responsible for, public affairs, worshipped local, patriotic gods. Each of these communities, with a sense of national solidarity, tended to have its own protecting divinity who took a special, if not exclusive, interest in that city or state. Sometimes families within the state had their lesser tutelary spirits, sometimes not; but the religion common to all the citizens was essentially

national and patriotic. It was a religion of and for the group of people who composed the state. But when independence was overwhelmed and national political life extinguished by a foreign conqueror; or when nations became merged in a vast conglomerate empire, so that the ancient group was politically dissolved; communal religion tended to be replaced by personal religion, and its national limitations to be effaced in a growing sense of universal spiritual needs.

This transformation among the Jews followed the successive conquests of their country by Babylonians, Greeks and Romans. It affected in divers ways the religious attitude of the people at large, but is most clearly seen among the great religious thinkers. The idea of national retribution for individual offense, which ascribed the defeat of the army at Ai to the act of Achan in concealing in his tent objects that he coveted from the spoil of the enemy, was seen by Jeremiah, after the first capture of Jerusalem, to be insufficient; and Ezekiel, during the Babylonian captivity, rejected the principle of vicarious retribution, insisting on personal punishment for personal sin. So long as the fault of the individual was supposed to be visited upon the nation as

a whole the system of rewards and punishments was not obviously contrary to fact. The life of the nation was indefinite, its career was naturally checkered with good and bad fortune, and it contained men who were righteous and others who were not, so that it was always possible to point to misfortunes which could be ascribed to evil deeds. But the doctrine that the individual is punished for his own sins raised a problem by no means equally simple. There were evidently bad men who prospered, and continued to do so until their death. The Book of Job discusses this difficulty, but fails to solve it. The solution was found in the doctrine of a future life where rewards and punishments were meted out by the absolute justice of God. The evolution of religious thought among the Jews after the overwhelming of their nation by the Chaldeans, involved the progress from a national to a personal view of religion, and an adjustment of moral ideas to that change. Such an evolution caused an eventual weakening of the monopoly of true religion for the benefit of the race. It gradually changed the old conception of the Hebrew Jahwe as the protector of his chosen people to that of the Supreme Ruler of the universe, the only true

God and therefore the God of all men; a conception that culminated in Christianity.

Unlike the Jews, whose prophets insisted on the worship of a single national divine ruler, the Greeks were polytheistic. Although divided into different states, jealous of one another, and often at war among themselves, they felt a kinship with all men of the Hellenic race, and accepted each other's gods. Still the separate commonwealths had their special protecting divinities. Their religion had a communal rather than a personal form, which endured so long as they were independent, and the politics of the state was the dominant interest of the citizens.* Pericles' oration on the soldiers who fell in the Peloponnesian War is essentially a patriotic address, and contains no vestige of what we should call personal religion. After the Greek states were deprived of liberty by Macedon the speculations of the thinkers turned from statecraft to philosophy and natural science. The period of transition is marked by Aristotle

* Professor W. S. Ferguson in his *Greek Imperialism* explains Alexander's desire for deification as an essential part of his imperial policy; pointing out (pp. 147–148) that enrolling him among the deities recognized by each city gave him a clear right to issue orders to all the citizens of the world, and thereby made possible a union of all the city states in a single great territorial state.

and Plato. Younger men, who followed them, pondered more on the philosophy of individual life, and produced the doctrines of the Stoics and the Epicureans. The political history of Athens was coming to an end when her philosophers began to devote their attention systematically to the meaning and object of human life. The result was a philosophy rather than a religion; but it was universal, not national, in its conceptions.

A similar process may be observed at Rome, not from being conquered, but from conquering the civilized world, and thereby breaking down no less effectually the nature of its own government; for with the establishment of the Empire the ruling classes at Rome lost the civic duties and responsibilities that had made affairs of state the object of their greatest concern, and direction of her destiny their first preoccupation. The interest, the attention, the moral sense of men was diverted from political to personal matters; from the group to the individual. With the frivolous this took the form of pleasure-seeking, of the spectacles in the Colosseum and the Hippodrome, and of profligacy; while it turned the thoughts of the serious to the question of personal destiny and the contemplation of the hu-

man soul. The craving to understand the mystery of individual life opened the door at Rome to the mystic religions of the East, which were themselves developed under despotisms where the higher thoughts of men looked, not outward to affairs of state, but inward to the yearnings of the spirit. Mystic oriental faiths from Egypt to Persia spread over the Roman Empire until the final adoption of Christianity as the highest form of personal religion. It is in this manner, quite as much as by the territorial expansion of the Pax Romana over the known world, that the Roman Empire prepared the way for Christianity.* Public opinion was replaced by personal opinion, by thought whose object was not the welfare of the state but of the individual soul. There was something lost as well as gained in all this. If the growth of personal religion was in part caused by, it also hastened, the decay of national patriotism. The contrast between group thought and individual thought is illustrated by the fact that the imperial authorities perceived instinctively that the personal religion of the early Christians was

* Sir Martin Conway (*The Crowd in Peace and War*, pp. 217 et seq.) makes some interesting remarks about the relation between the expansion of the Roman Empire and the development of individual religion.

in its nature hostile to the Roman state. This was, indeed, felt to a great extent on both sides, and was largely the cause of the persecutions that were carried on. To the clergymen who spoke of what a comfort it was to think the Lord was on their side, Lincoln's remark that he wanted to be sure he was on the Lord's side, could not have been made by one who regarded God as the special patron of his own group of people. Lincoln believed that the Almighty cared for the men fighting on both sides.

In this connection it is interesting to observe that the growth of a group spirit among workingmen during the nineteenth century has tended, notably in France, to a decay among them of personal religious faith. How far this is cause and how far effect; how widely it extends, and what other factors have entered into it would be a valuable subject of inquiry.

Dangers of the Group Spirit

Some of the writers on the subject of groups, like Professor McDougall * and Miss M. P. Follett,†

* *The Group Mind.*

† *The New State; Group Organization the Solution of Popular Government.*

appear to regard them as almost if not quite wholly beneficial; and there can be no doubt that the spirit they impart is of great value. They make possible collective thought and action which would be quite out of the question for men who had no such common bond. The group spirit is for all civilization, from the barbarous tribe to highly organized communities, not only unavoidable but absolutely essential. No collective life could exist without it, and no great progress could take place without its ramification in manifold forms throughout the body politic. The group spirit also brings out and gives scope to the higher qualities, the altruistic sentiments. There is no need of dwelling upon the influence of the family in developing this side of man's nature because it is well known to everyone. Without family ties, without social, intellectual, industrial and neighborly association in common interests and feelings, man would rarely be more than a selfish egotist. Nevertheless, as in all things human, the good is associated with a possibility of abuse. The group spirit, and the methods of operation to which it gives rise, involve dangers and evils that cannot be disregarded. They vary greatly in different kinds of groups. In those per-

vaded by a distinct consciousness that they exist as a means toward a larger end, an end that includes all men whether inside or beyond their membership, the dangers are very small. This is true of such professional organizations as Bar Associations and Medical Societies. But on the other hand in groups, like some of those based upon industry, conducted solely for the benefit of the members, in disregard of the welfare, and even to the injury, of outsiders or of other groups, the danger is real and great.

Loyalty to the body of which one is a member is an ennobling sentiment, but it may also be narrowing. Often loyalty in its growth attaches itself to a larger unit. The decrease of loyalty to the States as compared with loyalty to the nation has been one of the most notable facts in American history, due by no means wholly to the Civil War. The same thing may be seen in Germany, and in Great Britain as between England and Scotland. But loyalty does not always tend to favor the larger unit. It may follow the opposite course. New loyalties are constantly arising and old ones dying out. They may not be inconsistent, for everyone has several loyalties which do not habitually conflict: to his family, his group of

friends, his native town, his college, his church, his state and nation. These are interweaved, bringing him into group contacts with quite different persons, and if there is a broad outlook on life and all are regarded as means to a larger end they strengthen one another. But if they clash the very sentiment of loyalty hinders mutual understanding. As these lines are written the railroad strike is taking place in the United States. The shopmen who refused to leave their work, and the new men who have come in, are looked upon by the managers as loyal to the railroads, deserving therefore a seniority of position over strikers who return to work. But by the strikers they are regarded as disloyal to the cause of labor, and the final difficulty in reaching a settlement appears to turn upon this different point of view.

The group spirit tends also to lower the sense of personal responsibility for opinion. The participants, shouting or voting with the rest, feel little responsibility for what they think or do. How often does anyone who has gone with the crowd and afterwards sees it was a mistake, feel a sense of personal contrition or blameworthiness, when if the act had been solely his own he would

have felt it keenly? At the most he says, "We were mistaken." Association with the multitude covers a multitude of sins. The group relieves all but the leaders of much of the labor of forming opinions and of almost the whole responsibility for them afterwards; and yet a sense of personal responsibility for his opinions is perhaps the greatest duty that a citizen owes to the public. The sense of responsibility is based largely upon directing attention forcibly to the consequences of a course of conduct and the evil that may result from an error in judgment; while the group directs the attention of its members to the general conviction that they are right, and discourages the consideration of opinions opposed to those which they hold. These dangers would be even greater than they are were it not for the existence in a democracy in ordinary times of other groups, and especially of opposing political parties, each of which has a group mind of its own. In politics the firmly organized minority prevents the more popular group from going too far in a burst of irresponsible ardor. The peril from a group consciousness is limited by the very same imperfections in another group, under conditions which make the existence of the second

legitimate and respectable. We shall recur to these conditions when we come to treat of nations under the stress of war.

There is still another, and more insidious, danger in group consciousness. A man who seeks to promote his own personal advantage is aware that his efforts are selfish, and so is everyone else who considers his conduct. If he strives to attain his ends by methods which are of doubtful propriety he will be blamed, and find it impossible to justify himself. If he is upright he will scan his own actions with care, recognizing that the motive for his conduct is his own profit. If he is not of the highest character others will scan it for the same reason. But if he is working, not for himself, but for the benefit of a group of which he is a member, his motive appears unselfish, altruistic, philanthropic. He is striving for the good of others, and his conduct is transfused by a halo of benevolence. His efforts are loudly applauded by all the members of the group, who condone much because they believe his object good, and he is tempted to be less scrupulous about the means employed. But, in fact, there is no less selfishness in his aim than if he were engaged in promoting his own interests, the only

difference being that the selfishness is that of a group instead of a single person. With the increase of group action, in politics, in industry, in philanthropy and in every direction at the present day this is a real source of danger. In the immediate future the public has probably less to fear from personal than from coöperative selfishness.

The leaders of organized labor often talk about class war, and by this they contemplate, not the methods of war by the destruction of life, but the spirit of war. Yet that spirit signifies taking as the exclusive object the victory of a group, perhaps to the injury of a hostile group and often in disregard of the welfare of all others. Although less baldly expressed, this tends to be the attitude of any group, corporate or other, that places its own objects above everything else; and most groups that take themselves very seriously are in danger of doing so to a greater or less extent, if their spirit is not modified by larger considerations. They tend to substitute the interests, aspirations or ideas of a part for those of the whole, whereas a community to be prosperous must place welfare and justice for the whole above any part, and consider each part in rela-

tion to the whole. With the growing complexity of modern civilization, groups, group spirit and group action are not likely to diminish, and therefore the need of developing a sentiment of coöperation between rival groups has been clearly seen. This alone is, however, not enough, because magnifying the size of the group concentrates the interest, and lessens the influence of all persons not at the centre of power. Wise men have seen also the need of conciliation among groups with divergent aims; of pointing out the larger aspects of public policy and bringing groups together on the basis of the public welfare.

Summary

In approaching the subject of collective opinion it was first pointed out that suggestion and imitation, at one time regarded as universal in their operation, are in fact effective only where some disposition is already present to conform to them; and that the suggestion, or tendency to imitate, works by drawing attention to that existing disposition. Then the psychology of crowds and mobs, acting under sudden and short-lived passions, was discarded for our purpose as having a very limited connection with the formation of

enduring opinion. In considering group psychology in its larger social aspects it was argued that, although collective opinion is deeply affected by the existence of the group, by its members present and past, and by the very consciousness of belonging to the group, yet this influence is exerted solely upon and through the minds of living men. It was further suggested that no group could long endure without an idea of the reason for its existence. The difference was noted between unanimous opinions, which are the essential basis of every group, and opinions that are not unanimous but controversial, and an attempt was made to trace briefly the methods of their growth. In discussing the formation of the prevailing opinion in the decision of controversial opinions, stress was laid upon the effect of the difference in weight ascribed to the various factors that enter into the problem, upon the influence of leaders, and above all upon the effect of directing attention to different aspects of the question. In this connection it was suggested that the influence of the group spirit was exerted largely by opening some avenues of attention and closing others. Certain results of the presence or absence of a group spirit were illustrated

by the fact that in the ancient world the conception of universal personal religion arose on the breaking down of national patriotism; lastly the group spirit was shown to involve, along with its great benefits, grave dangers when carried to excess.

CHAPTER III

THE CHOICE AMONG ALTERNATIVES

Limiting the Number of Alternatives

We have seen how much the process of forming personal opinions is facilitated by limiting the range of possible alternatives, and this fact is even more important in the case of collective opinions. To recur to the illustration of the fork in the road; instead of a single traveller let us imagine a number of men, all ignorant of the route, trying to find their way. If they should come to a simple fork where two roads separate it would be easy to discover which of those two the majority thought the correct one. A show of hands for the right and left forks would disclose the prevailing opinion. If there were four or five roads at the fork there might well be no prevailing opinion, and it might be difficult to get a majority to agree on any one of them.

If, again, the road already travelled suddenly ended in an indefinite number of tracks in all directions, or in a trackless wilderness, it would

probably be wholly impossible, if each of the men really thought for himself, for all of them, or a majority of them, to agree upon any particular direction as the right one. They could agree to set down all the directions suggested, strike an average among them and adopt it; but that would not be a collective opinion, an opinion on the subject itself. It would be an artificial method of deciding a matter that must be decided in some way, where no common opinion could be formed. It would be more likely to be correct, but not more a true collective opinion, than an agreement to cast lots among the several preferences of the individuals. Each man could say, "It was the wisest thing to do, and I agreed to the method proposed, but the path selected was not the one I thought correct." In such a case there would be a collective opinion in favor of striking an average, not on the correctness of the direction so designated. The question of the path to be followed might also be determined by a prevailing willingness to follow some one member of the party as guide, trusting to his superior knowledge or judgment; but if so the collective opinion would be not on the path to be followed, but on the competence of the leader.

If everyone tried to form his opinions for himself by a choice among an indefinite number of alternatives the variety of opinions would be such as to render concerted action impossible. If the existing institutions and customs of a community were suddenly blotted wholly out of everyone's mind; if some morning everyone on awaking should forget his occupation and habits, and try to think out absolutely afresh how he and a hundred thousand people in a city should live, they would all starve to death before they could find out how to get their food. Men are preserved from such a situation by various conditions. For the most part their way lies along the fixed road of tradition, custom, and habit, in which the formation of a fresh collective opinion is unnecessary. This road exists already by inheritance, and it is a commonplace to say that civilization means an accumulation of traditions. Voltaire's remark on Rousseau's idea of the state of nature, that it made him want to go back to the woods and live on all fours, was a suggestion that the abandonment of all traditions involves a return to primitive barbarism.

The Effect of Traditions

If it be true, as biologists commonly assert, that acquired characteristics are not inherited, and if, as is generally believed, natural selection by the survival of the fittest has exercised little or no beneficial effect upon the dominant races since their emergence from barbarism, then civilization depends not upon any change of characteristics in man's nature, but only upon a transmission by tradition. In that case it follows that if all the traditions of a people should be suddenly obliterated it would revert to the primitive barbarism, or savagery, of the tribes from which it sprang. Probably there is some tendency to revert when traditions are thrown off. Parkman describes how readily certain early French adventurers in Canada abandoned the usages of civilization and adopted the savage habits of the Indian tribes into which they were adopted. Perhaps such a tendency to revert accounts to some extent for the bloodshed that often accompanies violent revolutions. Other causes for this revolutionary trait will be discussed in the following pages, but one obvious result of the sudden breaking down of institutions and habits on a

large scale may be seen in Russia today. There it has brought general starvation among a people that had hitherto exported large quantities of grain; among a population so predominantly agricultural that they would seem the least exposed to the danger of scarcity of food. No doubt the drought that supervened reduced the harvest still more, but, quite apart from this calamity, the political condition curtailed to an alarming degree the area under cultivation and the means of transportation to the famished districts. Whether the Bolshevik system in Russia is or is not one that could ever be made to work, the possibility of working it was thrown away by trying to introduce it suddenly and thereby destroying all existing social institutions, traditions and habits, with the mutual confidence that rested upon them. The whole social structure collapsed, and collective life could not maintain itself in working order.*

Even if the hypothesis that acquired qualities

* J. Herbert Parsons in *The Mind and the Nation* (pp. 50–51) remarks that an acquisition which by practice has become unconscious, like the execution of a difficult piece of music, is liable to be disarranged if consciousness is brought to bear upon it, and that in the same way when submission to authority has become a habit the intervention of thought about it may lead to chaos.

are never inherited be not wholly true, one cannot doubt that it is true in very large measure. This seems to be one of the cases where scientific thought and popular belief are at variance, and that is a serious condition. The world is proceeding upon the supposition of the indefinite perfectibility of man's nature, on the idea that by the extension of western civilization all races of men can be brought to one type. It is of vital consequence for practical purposes that we should know just how far this is true. A similar case of divergence between scientific thought and popular conviction comes still closer to us in the question of the effect on personal character of heredity and environment. According to the prevalent biological theory heredity counts for far more than environment, whereas the public is assuming that inherited tendencies can be changed indefinitely by education. If the biological view is correct we ought to modify our political, social, and above all our educational methods.

But this is a digression. All traditions cannot be completely forgotten in an instant, and therefore the question whether if they were a people would or would not revert to the condition of their remote ancestors is merely a curious specu-

lation. But the example of Russia illustrates the fact that if a large part of the traditions of a community are suddenly broken down the immediate construction of new habits involves the formation of collective opinions on more questions than is possible. The theory of the former Russian anarchists appears to have been that if all existing institutions were destroyed society would automatically reorganize itself in a new and better form. That is precisely what it will not do, because it cannot rapidly make a choice among the numerous different ways of doing innumerable different things, and the result must be chaos. A community can form a new opinion only on one question, or a very few questions, at a time, and for the rest must assume the acceptance of a common custom, that is a tradition, so deeply ingrained that substantially everyone acts in accord therewith.

When a particular change of habits is urged, or a new situation arises that requires a decision, then a choice must be made; and the choice, to be both real and intelligent, must be limited. Usually that is the case when one definite departure from tradition is suggested, for it presents only a single fork in the road and either the old or the

new path must be chosen. Observe the difference between a discussion that is abstract and academic and one designed to lead to action. The former rarely results in the consolidation of opinion because it is unlimited, whereas the other is limited by the need of reaching a conclusion that can be acted upon. The former is often the more interesting in giving scope for novel points of view, but it is for practical purposes ineffective, because it produces a dispersion of ideas and not a collective opinion.

Limitation in Legislative Bodies

For that reason the practice of all bodies that aim at definite action limits the field of decision by a system of motions and amendments, so that a single pair of alternatives is presented at a time, and debate for the moment is restricted to that alternative. In the English House of Commons, the mother of parliaments, which has had the longest experience of all the great legislative bodies in the world, a distinction is in practice drawn between those debates which are designed to lead to action and those which are not. On a bill, that is a proposal for legislation intended to be enacted as a statute, only one definite concrete

question is before the House for consideration at any moment, and debate is confined to that question. At the outset comes the question of reading the bill a first time. Unless the bill is of a highly important nature there is usually no opposition or debate at this stage; but if there be, the question is whether the House does or does not approve of the general principle of the measure. Of course the debate on this subject may range over everything that the bill seeks to accomplish in all its details, but no amendments can be moved, so that the question the House has to decide is simply whether or not it approves of the purpose of the bill, the decision upon any possible amendments being reserved for a future stage. Of the second reading precisely the same thing is true. Afterwards comes the committee stage, so called because it takes place when the House of Commons is sitting in Committee of the Whole. Then it is that amendments are moved, debated and voted on, one at a time, the single question in each case being whether that particular amendment to the bill shall be adopted or not. Finally when each amendment has been separately adopted or rejected, the House on the third reading decides whether it will or will not vote to

enact the bill as amended. Stripped of details of procedure needless to describe here, this is the progress of a bill in the House of Commons, and with many modifications in form which do not affect the basic principle, it has been generally adopted by all modern legislative assemblies.

The same principle is illustrated by certain other motions in the House of Commons which have an entirely different character. These are of two kinds: first those which are not designed to lead to action, or indeed to the expression of a collective opinion. Such are certain motions to adjourn, to go into supply, to reduce a proposed appropriation when there is no real desire to reduce it but merely to give an opportunity for discussing the subject to which it relates. The object in these cases is simply to criticise the administration or some branch thereof; and while the debate may often wander widely the House really decides nothing at all. Such debates are useful, the more so because individual members may say what they think freely, and thus give the ministers a caution without calling upon the House to commit itself as a body. The other kind of motion is one that expresses a want of confidence in the cabinet. This may not be its

form, but the form is immaterial, for the real question is, will the House continue to support the cabinet in office or not. The alternatives are clear and simple, the members voting according to their general attitude toward the ministry, often with little regard to the particular matter under discussion. The result is a collective opinion on the most important question that can come before Parliament; that of changing the party in power, Yes or No.*

Absence of Alternatives in Revolutions

The result of an absence of limitation is often shown when a government is overturned by a revolution. If the revolt is caused by a revulsion against the existing regime without a concrete, well organized and widely approved plan for a new form of political control — and this is usually true where a popular insurrection overturns

* A description of these different kinds of motions may be found in the writer's *Government of England*, chap. xviii, where he tries to explain how fully a distinction has been worked out between the occasions for individual criticism and for collective judgment; and how — unlike what occurs in the French parliamentary procedure — a vote that will result in turning out the cabinet is not taken in England unless the House is aware that it is expressing its opinion upon the cabinet's whole policy and conduct in office.

an existing government — there is no general agreement upon what shall be substituted. The field of choice is unlimited. No public opinion can therefore be rapidly formed, and the conduct of affairs commonly falls into the hands of, or rather is seized by, a minority which, in the absence of a public opinion, rules by force. The result is that a popular revolt against a despotism is often followed by an autocracy not less despotic, and indeed more so, because, not having behind it the traditions which incline the bulk of the population to obey the government to which they are accustomed, it is under a greater necessity of using force. Cromwell has been described as an irreconcilable at the head of an army; and that is much the position of the ruler of any state who, without a definite plan sanctioned by public opinion, strives to set up a new government on the wreck of an old one.*

The classic example is the French Revolution, and in fact the four revolutions that have taken place in France illustrate the problem. At the

* In this respect a marked difference may be observed between a revolution that aspires to create a new social order, and one which, like that of 1688 in England, aims at restoring a former condition.

first of these there was a complete absence of any general agreement upon the form of government that should take the place of the old monarchy; and the result was a series of violent struggles between the holders of power and their opponents, carried on by terrorism more or less extreme for a decade, until foreign war threw the government into the hands of a military dictator. In 1830 the leading men who overturned the throne of Charles X knew more nearly what they wanted in its place, and obtained a constitutional monarchy under Louis Philippe, without resorting to autocracy or terrorism. The revolution of 1848 was more violent, and the socialist ideas that had permeated some classes caused great disturbances. Yet the conception of a republic as an alternative to monarchy had become definite enough to make the conditions different from those of 1789, and hence the period of confusion was neither so long nor so terrible. Nevertheless there was not a consensus upon the character of a republic sufficiently exact to present that form of government as a single concrete alternative to monarchy, and thus a large element of uncertainty was introduced which paved the way for the *coup d'état* of Napoleon III.

Finally the revolution of September 4, 1870, differed from the preceding revolts. The Emperor was a prisoner of war in the hands of the Germans; his rule had evidently not been a success, and his dynasty was easily overthrown by a popular rising. Yet there was clearly a real public opinion in favor of continuing the war under another orderly administration, so that the Government of National Defence had no need of violent methods to maintain its authority in the country while the war lasted. At its close, therefore, there was an existing, if admittedly provisional, government in power. The revolt of the Commune in Paris was local, and its suppression was obviously in accord with the public sentiment of the nation. The question of the permanent form of government was curiously unlike anything that had gone before. As in other cases there was no simple alternative, for although the majority of the people probably preferred a monarchy of some kind, its advocates were sharply divided into three competing groups, and the country, now familiar with the idea of a republic, drifted into it without violence, not from deliberate choice, but from the lack of any practicable alternative.

The Russian revolution in 1917 illustrates much the same principles as the first revolution in France. In fact the experiences of the last hundred years have taught historians that the series of events in the French Revolution, which for a time were thought as unaccountable as they were unprecedented, followed a course that, in its main outlines, is normal when an old government is suddenly and violently overthrown. In Russia, after the fall of the Tsar, there was no definite concrete alternative to the old system, and an attempt was made by moderates to set up a stable government, which may be compared with the efforts of Mirabeau in France. It failed and power passed into the hands of the more radical Kerenski, who was in turn pushed out by the Bolsheviki, a small minority of the people, maintaining their control by violence and terror. But there is a notable difference between the French and Russian revolutions. In France after 1789 the leaders changed frequently; a new group coming to power and sending its predecessors to the scaffold, until the Convention, sick of bloodshed and terror, sent Robespierre himself to the guillotine, and a conservative reaction began. Even then as the reaction proceeded the same

men ruled only for short periods until the cycle of political changes was completed by the accession to power of Napoleon. In Russia, on the other hand, Lenine and his colleagues have remained in control throughout the whole period, and have themselves inaugurated a reaction from the extreme doctrines they had professed. This difference in the course of the two movements may be explained by the fact that the French Revolution professed to be democratic, that is to set up a government representing the whole people; and although the members of the old nobility soon emigrated or were proscribed, there was always a deliberative body elected on an extensive suffrage, which was nominally the supreme authority in government and in fact contained many members not in sympathy with the men who directed the administration. These members were often overawed, but always constituted a potential legal opposition, that is a potential alternative; and in fact Robespierre was finally overthrown by a revolt of the moderate part of the Assembly, aided by some of his former friends, against the domination of the extreme faction which had previously controlled the body by terrorism. Moreover the mob of Paris, which was

at times the dominant element in the situation, was an uncertain factor; and hence there was also a potential illegal opposition, — another potential alternative. This possibility of being overthrown — and to be overthrown meant execution — explains why the men in power sent even their former comrades, who held much the same political opinions, to the guillotine. If the leaders were not in complete harmony, if any cause of personal friction arose, there was a chance that one of them might use the malcontents in the Assembly, or the mob of Paris, to thrust out and kill his rival. In such a case the obvious policy was to strike first. In Russia, on the contrary, the Bolshevik movement did not purport to be democratic, but was based upon a small fraction of the people, and the central soviet assembly, which represents that fraction alone, is elected by a machinery which is said to be wholly under the control of the government. Hence there has existed no potential legal opposition, no possible alternative by legal process. Nor has there been a city mob, with anything like the force of that in Paris, to which a radical opponent could appeal. Lenine and his colleagues have therefore had no political rivals to fear, and controlling completely

the sole organization in the country, could be overthrown only by a conspiracy in the army, which by various methods they have so far kept in subjection. They have thus been enabled to make such changes in their policy as the agricultural and industrial difficulties rendered imperative, difficulties that otherwise would probably have involved their downfall. Had there been a potential opposition, it might, when the time for changes of policy came, have seized on it and used it to overturn the existing government.

In both the French and Russian revolutions the chaos caused by the absence of alternatives between which a choice could be made, and hence the absence of a collective opinion, resulted in the seizure of power by a minority, which maintained itself by force against those who did not agree with their aims. The difference in the tenure of office in the two cases lay in the presence in France, but not in Russia, of potential factors which men professing much the same aims could use against each other. In Russia, therefore, violence has been directed by the Bolsheviki chiefly against people whom they accused of being hostile to their regime. In France it was directed also, as the Revolution progressed, by

some of the revolutionary leaders against others, until they had largely killed one another off.

Changes brought about by a minority are not likely to endure unless the public comes to believe in them before that minority is overthrown. Moreover most of the changes wrought by extremists through violence go too far and are certain to produce a reaction. Permanent progress is apt to be gradual, each step being a comparatively limited departure from existing conditions. This was the meaning of Jules Simon's remark about the third French Republic, that it would be conservative or it would not survive. Even in violent movements there are, however, some changes that endure. The forms and methods of government that marked the French Revolution passed away, but even after the return of the Bourbons the social structure of the nation remained profoundly altered. Hereditary class privileges were dead and buried, and careers continued to be open to talent. The remnants of mediaeval institutions had been forever swept away, and even under the strongest influence of reaction France lived a new life. This is almost sure to be the case when new, and widely extended, property rights are created, especially in

land. When the Roman Catholics came back to power under Queen Mary they could not restore to the monasteries the lands confiscated and given away under Henry VIII. At the restoration of Louis XVIII in France some of the nobles hoped to get back their landed privileges, but their wiser friends told them it was impossible. Probably it is safe to prophesy that the transfer of land to the peasants will be one of the most permanent changes made by the Bolsheviki in Russia.

Absence of Alternatives and Autocratic Power

Not in popular revolts alone does the absence of a tangible alternative enable a ruler to wield despotic power. Its absence is a source, although by no means the sole source, of autocracy. Sometimes the authority of an absolute ruler is distinctly popular with his subjects, for it is a modern fallacy to suppose that all people want to rule themselves. Under the impulse of current theories such a desire has been more widely spread than ever before, until it has taken root in countries like Egypt and India, which have been autocratically ruled since the dawn of history; and

we are now informed that among the Esquimaux in Greenland an agitation is on foot for an independent republic. But a preference for democracy has certainly not always existed even among people who have long enjoyed a measure of self-government. After the civil wars that had torn the Republic the citizens of Rome seem to have accepted willingly the authority of Augustus, and in fact power was rather thrust upon, than seized by, him. Many such examples can be seen in history, for men often care more for orderly than for free government. Nevertheless the lack of a tangible alternative is an important factor in the maintenance of autocracy; and it may happen that a people, whether satisfied with their rulers or not, support them because there is nothing else in sight. This has been an element in the strength of all oriental despotisms. In the case of Augustus also, republican institutions having broken down, the only chance for civic peace was to place power and responsibility in the hands of the man who controlled the whole military force. The same motive affected the plebiscites of Napoleon III. The overwhelming votes in his favor could hardly have been entirely the result of governmental pressure. The mass of the people un-

doubtedly preferred maintenance of any orderly government to a plunge into anarchy or uncertainty; and those who did not approve of him, having no substitute to vote for, stayed away for the most part from the polls. Had there been a definite alternative, a concrete plan, for example, for a republic organized on definite lines, presented by men in whom people had confidence, the result might have been different. But there was no alternative, and its absence enabled Napoleon III to claim a general, indeed almost universal, popular confidence which was probably very far from the fact. The public had no true choice, and the device of a plebiscite, though effective for its purpose, was fictitious as an expression of popular opinion.

Opinion more Certain if only Two Alternatives

A choice between two alternatives is more likely to produce a true public opinion, and to represent correctly the average point of view, than a choice among a larger number. If three alternatives are presented the one that comes least near to the average opinion may well have a plurality because the other two divide the votes of people

whose desires really differ little. Suppose, for example, that there is a question of building a new schoolhouse in a town and that the voters should be offered three propositions, — to build a school costing $50,000, to build one costing $40,000, and not to build one at all. Suppose twenty-five per cent of the votes are cast for the first proposal, thirty-five per cent for the second, and forty per cent for the third. The last has a plurality, and yet it is quite probable that if only one of the proposals for a new schoolhouse had been presented it would have been carried. It may be that two of the proposals divide the votes of the minority, and if so no harm is done, because the view of the majority is truly expressed; but if the majority is so divided it does harm, because the prevailing opinion is falsified, and that is one reason why in legislative bodies a single question is habitually presented at a time to be voted upon Yes or No. Such a method is not, indeed, a perfectly accurate way of ascertaining opinion. Suppose in the case of the schoolhouse that a motion is made in town meeting for a building to cost $40,000, that an amendment is moved to increase the sum to $50,000, and that this is adopted by the votes both of those who

want the increase and of the opponents of any increase who hope thereby to defeat the measure. Then if the advocates of a $40,000 building prefer the larger sum to no new schoolhouse at all they vote for and carry it. The result may not be in accord with the average opinion; but it is more nearly so than if the plan had been rejected altogether. All methods of forming and ascertaining opinion are defective, but that of a choice between two alternatives is on the whole the least so.

In elections, where the number of candidates must of necessity be unlimited, it constantly happens that the presentation of a third candidate falsifies the result. Sometimes it is done in the United States for that very object, the party in the minority at a city election procuring the nomination of a member of the other party to run against the regular candidate of that party. Of course the minority do not vote for him, but by dividing the votes of the majority they may obtain a plurality in the election. Where there is serious discontent in the majority the trick occasionally succeeds, although that discontent has by no means reached the point of a desire to defeat the majority in favor of their opponents.

In England it frequently happens that the Labor Party nominates a candidate of its own where it has no serious chance of success, and thereby causes the election of the Conservative over the Liberal, although of the two they much prefer the latter. This has given rise to a demand for a second ballot — as in France before the recent introduction of proportional representation — when no candidate obtains an absolute majority at the first ballot. The plan enables each group of voters to show its strength without making the final result a false expression of public opinion, and to that extent is in accord with the principle of presenting only a single pair of alternatives. It has, however, grave disadvantages, for it tends to split the parties into fragments and thus prevent the maintenance of two great parties, standing for different public policies between which the electorate is to choose, and hence its ultimate result is not in accord with that same principle. In France this was less important because, as we shall see later, the political groups as such do not stand for concrete policies, and often do not represent substantial differences in the conduct of public affairs. The plan might produce a similar state of things in England, breaking the parties

into groups, making the cabinets temporary coalitions, and thereby weakening the control of public opinion over the work of Parliament.

The manner in which the question of the adoption of the Constitution of the United States was presented illustrates the advantage of a choice between two clear alternatives in the formation of a collective opinion. The alternatives presented were those of accepting a definite plan or leaving things as they stood. In the case of the plebiscites of Napoleon III the choice was not between the *status quo* and another proposal, for there was no other proposal. He was already in power, and the question was whether to confirm his authority or to refuse to do so; a refusal being merely to reject the existing government without putting any alternative in its place. But at the adoption of the American Constitution the choice lay between the existing, unsatisfactory condition and a single definite new plan. In all probability the Constitution would not have been adopted if more than one plan had been presented to the States for ratification. The men who desired a closer union would have been divided. Neither would probably have carried States enough to put a new form of government

into effect, and in all likelihood the attempt would, for the time at least, have failed. The whole process, indeed, by which the Constitution was framed and adopted is a good example of the way public opinion may be formed by the preparation and presentation of a single issue. When the Convention met there was a general desire on the part of its members to make a somewhat closer and stronger union among the States, but there was no concurrence on the questions how much closer it should be or what form it should take. An agreement could be reached only by constant mutual concessions made in an effort to find a scheme that would create a real central government without alienating the support of those who clung to the authority of the several States. The Constitution as framed was a web of compromises, wholly satisfactory to no one, but almost all the members of the Convention were willing to support it rather than continue the existing drift towards confusion and disorder. They stood together in recommending its adoption to the public, describing its merits, saying little about what seemed to them its imperfections, and thus presenting to the public the single issue of accepting the plan, or, by rejecting it,

perpetuating the present disturbances and dangers. Such a result could have been reached only by compromise; and by a compromise made in secret, because as already pointed out in the case of a jury, it is hard for a man to make a concession after he has publicly proclaimed that it is contrary to his opinions. Moreover the differences of views in the Convention would, if known, have furnished to the outside opponents of the project arguments quoted from its advocates; and considering the narrow margins by which it was ratified in some of the state conventions, objections brought up in this way would probably have been enough to turn the scale.

Compromise and Secrecy

It may be well to consider for a moment these last two points. The public cannot be offered the simple alternative of accepting or rejecting a proposal unless a considerable number of people have agreed on that proposal; otherwise it is merely the suggestion of a few men without sufficient support to give it a reasonable chance of success. But since men do not automatically think alike, especially on new subjects, there must be some compromise before an agreement is reached. The

art of government is in great part the art of compromise, not of principles, but of methods, of details and of points not vital to the object sought. Gladstone once said of a colleague in the cabinet that he could throw his mind into the common stock. That meant that he could express his own ideas clearly, and then compromise so as to bring about an agreement, or common opinion, on a central point of view. The capacity to throw one's mind into the common stock is one that grows by practice, and this is among the reasons why peoples unaccustomed to acting in concert find so much difficulty in working popular government; and why a revolution against autocratic rule by a people long subjected to it is apt to be followed by violence or sterility. The French Revolution, and the recent one in Russia, led to violence; that of 1848 in Germany, on the other hand, which aimed at a national government on a liberal basis, wholly failed to create an effective government of any kind. For a time the German thrones tottered and the princes bowed before the storm, but the National Assembly at Frankfort took several months in debating the rights of man, and when at last it succeeded in drafting a constitution, reaction had

set in and its chance was lost. Men who are in constant consultation get into the habit of throwing their minds into the common stock and reaching agreements easily without a surrender of their principles; perhaps it would be well to say without magnifying into principles their differences about the method of attaining a common end. It may be observed also that in doubtful cases they agree more readily on subjects they consider frequently, than on those which involve some new principle.

Secrecy of proceedings is also an important matter, especially where unanimity is desired. We have seen how essential it is to a jury, and how valuable it was in the case of the Constitutional Convention in the United States. Experience has shown its usefulness wherever compromise is necessary. This does not mean that all the proceedings must be secret. The evidence and arguments in a case in court are open to the public, and must be so if popular confidence in the fairness of trials is to be maintained, but both judges and jurymen consult in private. Legislatures debate in public, but compromises are made in committee rooms; and in countries with a parliamentary form of government, the most im-

portant bills to be presented are prepared by a cabinet whose consultations are surrounded by the strictest confidence. No doubt compromise carried on in secret opens a door for abuse; no doubt it is often and gravely abused, particularly where personal or local interests are in question. One of the most serious evils in the State legislatures in America is connected with log-rolling, that is the private trading of votes on special legislation. This, however, is apparently done less by formal agreement, than from the expectation of obtaining favorable votes for one's own measure by being complacent in voting for the bills of other members. Any negotiations for the purpose, moreover, being private would not be prevented by requiring committees to deliberate in public. It cannot be repeated too often that no human institutions are perfect, and that the problem they present is to seek those which have the greatest merits, and strive to minimize or remove the effects of the objectionable features connected therewith. If the object of popular government is to form and express a genuine public opinion on large questions — and this is surely the meaning of democracy — then the presentation of questions in such a shape that an

opinion upon them can readily be formed is of the first importance. This implies proposals framed by a concurrence of men with differing minds and diverse ideas; and involves, therefore, some compromise of views. If democracy is not so conducted there will inevitably be either control by a single ruler, or a small coterie, which is autocracy; or anarchy of opinion, which is equally far from government by the opinions of a majority. Compromise has an ugly sound to the public, who think of it as an abandonment of principle for personal or other improper motives. Daniel Webster lost his reputation among many of his former supporters by advocating the Compromise of 1850, and yet in the calmer light of the present day that measure seems to have been almost wholly for the advantage of the policy he had consistently pursued, and a necessity under the circumstances of the time. If instead of speaking of compromise in politics we were to use the expression, "throwing one's mind into the common stock," the legitimate function of compromise in public life would be better understood.

During the war open diplomacy was urged as the solution of international difficulties. If by this is meant that the rulers of nations should no

longer be able, regardless of public opinion, to bring affairs to a pass that makes war inevitable, the object is excellent and some way may be found of attaining it. But if it means that statesmen of different countries should not be in a position to negotiate a settlement of conflicting views without making public their correspondence and discussions, the plan would defeat its own object. An upright secretary for foreign affairs of each nation must state the whole claims of his own people strongly, and then strive to reach such an agreement as will avoid a conflict or serious friction. It should be his aim so far as possible to prevent ill-feeling between the two peoples over the matter, for ill-feeling of any kind does not tend to amicable relations. If he is obliged to make his statement of claims public, and does not put them strongly, the foreign government will believe that his own countrymen do not take them very seriously and will be less complacent in the matter. If he makes public a strong statement of the claims, he is likely to arouse among a large part of his own people such vigorous sentiments in their favor that it may be hard for him to compromise afterwards. One of the obstacles in rearranging amicably the boundaries of Euro-

pean countries after the war came from the fact that statesmen and writers put forth publicly claims to territory based upon racial, historic, economic and military grounds, which took such a hold upon the imagination of their peoples that it was well-nigh impossible to reduce them without exciting popular indignation. Many of the claims were wholly irreconcilable with one another, adding greatly to the inherent difficulties of the situation, causing acute friction over the arrangements made, and leaving for the future a legacy of discontent that will not wholly subside for generations yet to come. It is dangerous to make even a personal quarrel with a neighbor public if one hopes to be on good terms with him afterwards, and it is the more so when the publicity excites strong feelings on the part of others who are interested. There is a Chinese proverb that he who rides on a tiger cannot dismount. For good and for evil, but predominantly for good, compromise in human affairs must go on, and compromise does not flourish under the eyes of the multitude. The essential foundation of public opinion is the presentation for the fullest discussion of a proposal framed by compromise, and then strongly supported and strongly opposed.

Limiting the Scope of Alternatives

Bagehot remarked in his book on The English Constitution that Englishmen do not like abstract arguments; that to impress the House of Commons a speaker had better say, "Without committing myself to the tenet that 3 and 2 make 5 — I think I may, with the permission of the Committee, assume that 3 and 2 do not make 4, which will be a sufficient basis for the important propositions which I shall venture to submit on the present occasion."* Human affairs are so complex that all abstract generalizations about them are merely approximations. They are at best hypotheses that would be true were there no factors in the case other than those on which the generalization is based; but in practical affairs there always are other factors which modify the application of the abstract principle. The attempt, indeed, in politics to act strictly in accord with general theories is apt to lead to violence, because the mass of the people, seeing the practical difficulties in what is proposed, are likely not to accept it, and the believers in the theory, unable peaceably to carry public opinion with them

* *The English Constitution*, p. 178.

for what they conceive to be the essential for the regeneration of mankind, are driven either to mere academic discussion which means abandoning attempts at carrying out their ideas, or to the use of force. That is another reason why the leaders of revolutions based on abstract theories, like the French and the Russian, resort to violent methods of accomplishing their ends; and violence is normally followed by reaction.

Change to be permanent must enlist the support of a widespread, if not general, approval, and public opinion is apt to sanction only a limited departure at any one time from existing traditions. In democratic countries, under ordinary conditions, the efforts of men who advocate a change of policy are directed to securing the favor of a popular majority, or of a majority in the body that purports to represent the people. For that purpose they must seek to win the assent of persons of moderate views, those people who stand in the middle of the road, and who could easily be thrown into the ranks of the opposition by proposals which are too drastic. That is the meaning of Bagehot's remark, and it applies to all peoples long accustomed to the practical conduct of public affairs. In popular govern-

ments, therefore, the normal tendency is to have the alternatives, whether presented by rival political parties or otherwise, different enough to make an issue, but not so far apart that the men who do not go to extremes will be alienated by either alternative. Both sides keep fairly near to the national traditions; a condition that sometimes causes men of advanced radical views to declare that both of the old parties are hopelessly conservative.

The Power of Minorities

Although the normal condition in popular government is a gradual movement, by a limited change at a time, which wins the approval of public opinion, it is a mistake to suppose that in a democracy the majority always has its way. One of the paradoxes that experience has revealed is the enormous strength of any minority which is willing to push its convictions far enough. Ten per cent of the respectable citizens of any democratic community, who were ready to die rather than obey a law, would prevent the enactment of that law, render its enforcement impossible, or cause its repeal. The reason is that by their rejection of the convention that the ma-

jority shall rule they present an alternative which the majority is unwilling to face. Their resistance can be put down only by a departure from civilized traditions that people who disapprove wholly of their conduct cannot be brought to sanction. The case of the militant suffragettes in England is in point. The vast majority of the English people abhorred their violence, their setting fire to houses and mutilating pictures in national galleries, and had no sympathy with their hunger strikes when imprisoned; but at the same time were unwilling to tolerate their being allowed to starve themselves to death or even being forcibly fed. The suffragettes did not, indeed, by their conduct win the suffrage that they desired — that came for other reasons during the war — but they did succeed in making the efforts to put a stop to their mischief something very like a farce. For the same reason attempts to proscribe the religion of a minority have very rarely been successful. Fierce as has been at times the intolerance of the dominant faith, whatever it might be, almost no government, except the Spanish monarchy, has resorted in its persecutions to methods drastic enough to extirpate an unpopular religion.

Another illustration of the principle may be found in our own country after the Civil War. While the majority in the North still believed in the right of the negro to the suffrage, white men in the South were striving, by a resort to intimidation and tissue ballots, to escape the intolerable conditions it had brought about. It became evident, therefore, that the right of the former slaves to vote could be maintained only by the presence of federal supervisors at elections backed by federal troops, and this meant continuing to treat large parts of the South as a conquered and subject country. That President Hayes was unwilling to do longer. He therefore recalled the troops, — a decision in which he was soon supported by public opinion in the North. It was a case where members of the dominant political party clung to a principle, but were unwilling to take the measures against their opponents necessary to make it effective. The same dilemma has recently been presented in Ireland. The English government desired to put down Sinn Fein, or what it called " the murder gang," and it used methods to which the people of England are not accustomed. But, having failed to enforce subjection as rapidly as it expected, it

found that public opinion would not support those methods indefinitely, and it was constrained to abandon the attempt at suppression.

The reason why a minority that pushes its opposition to an extreme is enabled to prevail is that by so doing it changes the character of the alternative presented to the public. In place of the original question of the policy to be pursued is substituted a new one, that of the treatment of recalcitrants, the extent of whose opposition had not been foreseen. The question whether the militant suffragettes should be allowed to starve themselves to death was quite a different one from that of giving them the right to vote. It appealed to different sentiments, and awoke a different response. The question how long the Southern States should be held in a condition of subjection was not the same as the question of the right of the negro to vote, and it presented political considerations of another character, not to be settled solely on the ground that the negro was entitled to the suffrage. In discussing, therefore, any policy it is important to consider not only whether, if carried out, it will be a benefit to the community, but also whether it will be possible and wise to take the measures necessary

to enforce it. This question the people of the United States must soon decide in regard to the enforcement of the national prohibition amendment. Americans are far too much inclined to favor a law and oppose its enforcement. To enact it pleases the reformer, not to enforce it avoids much friction, but the combination weakens dangerously the law-abiding sense of the community.

Not unlike the ability of a minority to defeat the will of the majority by carrying opposition to an extreme is another paradox whereby popular traditions are set at nought. A politician who violates the conventions of public life boldly enough will sometimes succeed. It was in this way that the Roman Republic was broken down by Marius, Sulla and Julius Caesar. No doubt the old forms of government had become ill adapted to the new conditions of territorial expansion. No doubt also the means these men employed were not purely political, for they made use of their armies to accomplish their designs, but it was the bold departure from Roman political traditions that made their success. A modern example is furnished by the life of Bismarck. He violated the provisions of the Prus-

sian Constitution as they were commonly understood about the control of the Landtag over appropriations; he carried on the Government for years without a budget; he broke by force the traditions of the Germanic Confederation; but by his success in the wars with Denmark and Austria, he established his position and reputation on a firm basis in popular opinion. This again was a case of success through military victory; but that is not a necessary factor. The career of Lord Randolph Churchill is noteworthy in this connection. He transgressed, not indeed constitutional provisions, but the traditional amenities of English public life, and he played his game boldly. By using the Union of Conservative and Constitutional Associations as an instrument for opposing Lord Salisbury, the head of his own party, he raised himself to a position of such importance that Lord Salisbury felt constrained, in spite of an insulting letter Lord Randolph had written him in the name of the Union, to make peace; and on becoming Prime Minister offered him a seat in the cabinet. This Lord Randolph accepted, abandoning the claims he had made on behalf of the Union for a share of the party funds. A couple of years later, having attained in Lord

Salisbury's next ministry the post of Chancellor of the Exchequer, the second position in the cabinet, he tried again to prove himself indispensable by a bold move. Disagreeing with his colleagues about military expenditures he resigned, evidently expecting to be asked to come back on his own terms; but this time he miscalculated his power. His place was filled by Goshen, and he sank to a position of political insignificance.

Summary

A limit in the number of alternatives among which a choice must be made is even more important in the formation of collective, than of individual, opinion. Such a limit is ordinarily provided by traditions that are followed blindly. A sudden blotting out of all traditions might result in a reversion to barbarism, and would certainly produce a chaos in which collective life would be almost impossible. When a new decision is made by a large body of men among alternatives presented to them, the more these are limited the more real and intelligent the choice will be. The procedure in legislative bodies, therefore, habitually restricts the questions voted upon to a single pair of alternatives at a

time, that is to a single question that can be answered, Yes or No. The absence of limited alternatives between which a choice can be made is one of the chief causes of the violence that usually follows the overthrow of a government by force. Examples of this are shown in the French and Russian Revolutions, different as they were in other respects. The absence of a possible alternative is, indeed, one of the sources of all autocratic rule, a fact illustrated by the plebiscites of Napoleon III. The presenting of a single pair of alternatives is not a perfectly accurate method of ascertaining collective opinion, but it is on the whole less imperfect than any other. The framing and adoption of the Constitution of the United States is an example of its effectiveness. In order that the public may be offered definite alternatives for their choice, these must ordinarily be prepared by compromise in secret, that is by a number of men who throw their minds into the common stock. The alternatives, or rather the new proposal that presents the positive alternative, must, in order to have a good chance of success, be limited in its scope, not going so far as to repel men of moderate minds. In this connection it was observed that, even in democratic

countries, desperate minorities, or bold individuals, can often prevent the majority from doing what it desires by pushing resistance to such a point that the majority is unwilling to take the steps necessary for their repression.

CHAPTER IV

POLITICAL PARTIES

The Cause of Political Parties

The formation of opinion by the presentation of alternatives brings us to the question of the cause and functions of political parties. In small bodies of men parties are wholly needless, because the alternatives for consideration can readily be presented by individual members, and such compromises as are required to meet the average point of view can be reached by informal discussion. The existence of anything like a constant line of cleavage among the members is, indeed, a serious detriment, because it causes a bias, and prevents them from throwing their minds fully into the common stock. It produces a sense of antagonism that hinders such an open-minded consideration of the arguments advanced by colleagues as is possible when they habitually agree with one another. Such a cleavage may be unavoidable where the members represent two very different points of view, but it is not the less a

misfortune. Everyone who has sat on any board recognizes this. He knows that if there is a constant division into two factions a man who would otherwise be universally looked up to as a wise councillor is regarded as a shrewd party leader, and in fact it is very difficult for him not to play that part. For the same reason a court of law divided into a constant majority and minority loses much of its hold on public confidence. The respect for a court in democratic countries, where appointments to the bench are, and ought to be, made from both of the leading political parties, would be much weakened if in deciding cases, even those which involve constitutional questions, the judges habitually divided on party lines.

As it is an evil to have a constant line of cleavage in a small board, so it is harmful to have parties injected into a body where the questions that give rise to them have no proper application. Every municipal reformer knows that this is one of the chief sources of misgovernment in American cities. The political parties are based upon national issues, or to a less extent on those arising in the state, with none of which the questions of city administration have any proper connection.

Yet elections in large cities, and votes in city councils, often take place on national party lines. Such a condition would speedily wreck any industrial concern, and everyone who cares for honest and efficient administration is well aware of its disastrous effects. Like all other phenomena it is not due to pure malignity but has a cause, and until that cause is thoroughly understood there is little prospect of a cure. It may be observed that it is less universal in small municipalities than in large ones. Many of the small cities do not elect their officers, or conduct their affairs, on party lines, as the large cities generally do. In communities of moderate size all men nominated for public office may be well known to their neighbors, and elected without the aid of an organization for the purpose. But in a large city, if the election is by popular vote, there is more need of a concerted effort to select the candidates, inform the voters and urge them to come to the polls. That means an organization; and since an organization, and a group consciousness, exist ready made in the national political parties it is not unnatural that men should make use of them, particularly as it gives the persons in charge of the party machinery an opportunity to keep it in

working order, and reward the active partisans by a liberal use of the city patronage. If the largest American cities were independent states, and the choice of the mayor were made by popular vote there would be parties making the nominations and conducting the elections, but they would be strictly local parties, divided on the policy to be pursued by the city, not, as at present, based mainly on issues framed for the nation or the state.

The Effect of Size

This opens the question to be considered, the cause of political parties. People often discuss whether they are a good or an evil. In fact they are both; for they are groups, and exhibit the tendencies for good and evil that all groups possess to a greater or less extent. The essential point for our immediate purpose is that under normal conditions they are as inevitable as the tides in the ocean. Small bodies of water have no tides, but in large ones tides exist whether we want them or not; and in like manner the existence of parties is greatly affected by the size of the political community, that is by the number of people called upon to form a collective opinion

on questions of policy or candidates for public office. Writers sometimes speak as if the comparative unimportance of party in Switzerland were due to the character of the Swiss people. That has its influence, no doubt; but the result is due also to the small size of the electorate. In every country where racial or religious questions are not dominant, political parties are, as a rule, created by national, rather than local, issues and elections. Now in Switzerland the largest electoral district for national purposes, and indeed for any purpose, is the canton, and the largest canton contains less than two thirds of a million people; the others being smaller, most of them very much smaller. Moreover, the cantons are electoral districts only for certain limited purposes. They are such for the election of the cantonal executive; but for national objects, and hence for the effect on national parties, they are used as districts only for the election of the members of the second chamber, called the Council of States, a body not of the first importance. The districts for elections to the National Council, the most influential branch of the national legislature, run from twenty thousand to one hundred and fifty thousand people, — the great difference

in size being due to the fact that several representatives are chosen in the larger districts. Even the largest has only about half the population of an ordinary congressional district in the United States, and is not too large for a personal knowledge of the candidates. So far, therefore, as the choice of members of the legislature is concerned the size of the several electorates is not in itself large enough to demand strong party machinery. Nor does the choice of the national executive make it necessary. This body, called the Federal Council, is elected by the national legislature; and if it were a partisan body a vote for a member of the legislature might be a choice to which of the rival parties the administration of the country should be entrusted. If so, the whole country would be virtually one great electorate for the choice of the executive authority. But in Switzerland that is not the case, because it is the custom to reëlect the Federal Councillors without regard to party, and the minority is habitually represented upon it. For the purpose of election to any public office, therefore, the Swiss citizen makes a choice only between candidates in a comparatively small district, and for this highly organized political parties are not required. Nor

are they more needed for the formation of collective opinion on questions of policy, because proposals for legislation and for executive action come in the main from the Federal Council which is not a partisan body.* Such a method of conducting public business is partly a cause and partly a result of the small importance of political parties. It is, however, a condition, and that condition could hardly exist if the electorates were very much larger.

In the United States, on the other hand, since the Electoral College has become a mere piece of machinery for recording by states the results at the polls, each citizen really votes for the President, and thus the electoral district is the whole country, with a population of more than one hundred millions, by far the largest electoral district that the world has ever known. In Great Britain also, while the voter casts his ballot for a member of Parliament, he is really voting for or against the ministry of the day, and hence there also the electoral district consists of the whole

* At a Referendum on a national law the people of all Switzerland vote as a single body, but for reasons too complex to be discussed here the voting does not ordinarily take place on party lines, and these votes are not sufficiently frequent, or at such regular intervals, as to promote party organization.

country, with a population of over forty millions. For the practical purposes of national politics the electoral district in Switzerland is, therefore, not only smaller but vastly smaller than in England or the United States,

The reason why the necessity for political parties increases with the size of the community is to be found in the fact that the larger the number of minds the greater the difficulty of procuring an agreement among them, or a majority of them. The ancients believed that democracy could exist only in a people not too numerous to meet in an assembly and hear a man's voice. The device of representative government was supposed to have enlarged indefinitely the range of popular government because the community, however large, could elect a body of representatives that could meet and deliberate together, and thus democracy could be conducted on any scale. A system of this kind might work very well without political parties if the representatives were free to use their own discretion on all the questions that arise. A representative is, and always must be, free to exercise his own discretion on minor questions, and on the compromises needed to give effect to the general object; and

complete discretion on his part is all very well if each constituency is simply to choose a man in whose honesty and good sense it has confidence, and allow him to exercise his own untrammelled judgment, so that the policy to be pursued is determined by a collective opinion freely formed in the representative body after it meets, and without regard to popular preference. This is to some extent, as we shall see, the condition in France today, where the groups in the Chamber of Deputies which make and unmake cabinets and control current legislation do not exist as such in the country at large. But if, on the contrary, the public is to exert an effective direction over the course pursued, if it is to determine the general policy of the government, some process must be adopted for insuring that this policy is not out of harmony with the opinions of the electorate. One method of doing this has been a reference of questions back to the constituency before the delegate could give a final vote. Such a formal reference was clumsy, caused great delay, and has disappeared; although in Switzerland and in many of our States it has to some extent been replaced by an appeal to the whole people in the form of the Referendum. Another

method has been that of giving to the representative specific instructions. This also has been superseded, partly by pledging candidates before election on definite questions, and partly by ascertaining their general attitude before they are nominated. This last is in practice done by means of a platform of principles drawn up by a party convention, or, as in England, by an understanding that the candidate if elected will support the policy of the cabinet or of the parliamentary opposition. Moreover it is not enough that the opinions of the representative should be in accord with those of the particular voters who have elected him. In order that the views entertained by the candidate and his constituents may have any considerable chance of being put into effect, among a people too numerous or widely scattered for the rapid formation and expression of collective opinions, there must be a policy concerted with the candidates in other constituencies forming a basis for common action. That means consultation and organization on a large scale, — in short a national political party. Rousseau disapproved of political parties. Perceiving the fact that group psychology, as we should now call it, distorts the nat-

ural formation of opinion, he declared that no community is free in which factions exist; and he came to the perfectly logical conclusion that a people could have perfect freedom only if small enough to meet in a popular assembly. This is, no doubt, the ideal democracy, using ideal, not in the sense of the perfect form, but of that which has the least intrinsic imperfections. But if democracy is to exist on a large scale it must accept the limitations and imperfections which that scale inevitably brings.

Political parties in the modern sense developed in England during the eighteenth century, and in the United States they arose within a few years after the adoption of the Constitution. The particular issues out of which they grew are for our purpose unessential. Some grave differences of opinion were certain to arise, and to result in parties as the necessary means of concerted action. Men are prone to decry the means used to attain objects with which they themselves have little sympathy, and yet to use the same means to accomplish results in which they are interested. People complain of combination when it takes the form of an industrial trust, and laud it in the form of a trade union, or vice versa. The men

who criticise most severely the existence of political parties as an almost unmixed evil are often the very ones who are most active in promoting for public objects organizations practically managed by as small a group of leaders, conducted in as autocratic a manner, and of which the meetings are as much cut and dried beforehand as is the case in the machinery of party. There is, indeed, this important difference. The organization which these men are conducting has usually a single object, the effecting of a particular reform, and since no one joins the organization who is not in favor of that object, the only questions that can arise are concerned with the method of attaining it; whereas political parties deal with the whole complex field of government.

The Function of Political Parties

This brings us to the proper functions and the defects of party. We have seen that in a body of men too large to form a collective opinion by general discussion and mutual concession, the possible conditions of government are: either direction by a single ruler or a small group, which is autocracy; or anarchy, which is the negation of all government; or the formulation by concerted

action of alternatives between which the body can choose. Autocracy is not government by public opinion, and therefore does not concern us here. Let us consider anarchy. It is the case already discussed where everyone makes up his own mind independently, with the result of an indefinite number of minorities and no collective or majority opinion capable of providing a basis for common action. For that reason it may be properly termed a chaos of opinion. Many years ago an American idealist advocated the duty of every citizen to vote for the man best qualified in his own opinion for the office to be filled, whether anyone else voted for him or not. If this were really done by everyone the ballots would give no indication whom the people on the whole preferred for the office. There would be a great number of candidates with few votes apiece, and the one with the largest plurality might well be highly objectionable to the majority. But everyone would not do so. Men who had a personal interest in the result would certainly organize themselves to control the election, and would succeed if the citizens who had only the public interest at heart remained unorganized. The attitude of our idealist friend was akin to that of the

conscientious pacifist in a war, who is unwilling to oppose the hostile army with military weapons and organization; but, trusting to some inherent virtue in human nature, believes that if he sits on a stile and continues to smile, or upbraid, he will soften the heart of the foe. This state of mind seems to be due to a lack of practical imagination, to a failure to understand two things: one that selfish men will organize to attain their ends, the other that the bulk of their followers would not support them if they believed them wicked. It was a false assumption in Whittier's "Barbara Frietchie" that the enemy knows in his heart that he is in the wrong. Such an idea is based upon the mistaken supposition that opponents do not believe their object and their methods just. Men do not carry on a war, or a political campaign, with a conviction that they are doing wrong. Boss Tweed and his coadjutors must have been conscious of their iniquity, but to suppose that the great mass of Tammany voters were deliberately abetting what they thought wrong is to misunderstand human motives. Wrong they certainly were, and the chief causes of their error were class prejudice, group loyalty, ignorance and indifference. The man who desires to fight effec-

tively for what he believes to be right against what he believes to be wrong must do so, not alone, but in coöperation with all other men who have the same object. That means a combination of many people for a common purpose, with the organization, the mutual concessions and concerted action which it implies. This is true whether the body that is to take such action comprises substantially all the people, as in a democracy, or whether it includes only a selected, though large, fraction of them, as in some aristocracies; but for our purpose it is needful to consider only democracies.

We are therefore brought to the third possible condition, the only one by which public opinion can be intelligently formed and expressed, that of the formulation by concerted action of alternatives between which the public can choose. On a particular subject this can be done by an organization specially formed for the purpose, not with a view to the control of general politics, but solely to bring that one subject to popular attention and advocate the solution desired. The Anti Corn Law League in England was an organization of this kind, and so is the Civil Service Reform Association in the United States, both

successful against strong opposition. Societies of that kind, however, cover only a part of the field of public life. It is inevitable that there should be organizations of a more general character which nominate the candidates, and to some extent formulate the issues, at all national elections. Such organizations might be formed for a particular election and then disappear; but the labor and expense of building them up, the difficulty of doing so except when a question arises that stirs popular feeling to a peculiar degree, are so great that in fact party organizations formed for general politics are apt to endure long. The true function then of political parties is that of formulating and presenting the alternatives between which the people are to choose. Let us repeat that the question is not whether the parties are good or evil, for a consideration of the way public opinion is naturally formed and made politically effective in a democracy, as well as the actual experience of all large democratic countries, shows that they are inevitable. But we may well inquire to what extent they fulfil their proper function. Mark, to what extent, not how well, for the two things are different. If the parties present perfectly clear, definite alternatives on

every political question they are performing their function to the fullest extent; and yet the alternatives they present may both be bad, and if so they are certainly not performing it well. As the object of this inquiry is not a criticism of actual politics, but a study of the process by which public opinion is formed and expressed, the extent, not the excellence, of the function of parties is our immediate concern. Is it not reasonable to suppose that a fuller knowledge of social processes will in the end point the way to improve human conditions?

Parties in the United States

Light may be thrown upon this subject by considering the functions actually performed by political parties in three large democratic countries. The alternatives that may be formulated by the parties relate to two kinds of subjects, candidates and questions of public policy. The immediate and absolutely unavoidable question for decision at any election is the choice of the person to fill the office, and certainly the parties in America perform the function of presenting candidates at national elections to the fullest extent, nominating them wherever there is the

slightest chance, and often when there is no possible chance, of election. In fact, they go far beyond their province, by making nominations in local elections where national politics should play no part.

The formulation of alternatives on public policy is a very different and much more difficult matter. On many questions a concrete opinion cannot be reached, or precise alternatives presented, until the subject has been threshed out in the legislature and the objections, obstacles and probable effects have been carefully considered. On such matters an indication of policy, somewhat vague, is all that is possible. This is true everywhere. Moreover the questions that arise in conducting public affairs are so numerous, and involve so many cross divisions, that in no country could all the members of a party be fully in accord on every one of them. Nor would any compromise of views among the leading members before election make it possible to attain that result completely. Now in matters on which the members of a party do not agree their action varies in different countries. In America candidates are comparatively free to differ about them.

The principles for which the members of the

party are supposed to stand are declared in the platforms issued by the national and state conventions; but as Lord Bryce remarks, the tendency of these documents "is neither to define nor to convince, but rather to attract and to confuse."* In their fervor, generality and vagueness they bear some resemblance to letters of recommendation,—in this case written by the body recommended. On abstract doctrines about which no one disagrees they are satisfactory to everybody who likes grandiloquence; but they are far from precise on matters where there is a substantial difference of opinion, being often so worded that those who do not agree can by interpretation find a crumb of comfort, instead of having the door closed tight in their face. One reason for this is the desire to obtain the votes of people whose party attachments are not strong, who might on the whole be inclined to vote for the party, but would be deterred by too rigid a statement on some point with which they are not in sympathy, or some unpalatable application of a policy with which they are in general accord. Many men, for example, believe in protection for

* *The American Commonwealth*, chap. LXXXIII. Ed. of 1910, vol. II, p. 334.

the occupations in which they are engaged, but would be offended by a declaration in favor of raising the tariff on lumber, wool or sugar, dyes or binder twine, if their occupation involves buying, instead of selling, those things. Some years ago a story was told of a prominent politician who was standing on the rear platform of a railroad train looking back over the track, when the porter came out and informed him that he must go inside the car. "Why so?" said the politician. "Because," replied the porter, "it is against the rules to stand on the platform." "But I thought a platform was meant to stand on?" "Oh no, Sir, a platform is not meant to stand on. It is meant to get in on." Another reason for not making the platform too precise is the fact that on some questions which cannot be wholly passed over the regular members of the party themselves are distinctly not in accord, and the platform must be so phrased that the candidates for Congress and the state legislatures shall be free to vote as they, or their constituents, think best without being charged with a violation of election pledges given by the platform.

There is a common impression in foreign countries, not wholly absent among Americans un-

familiar with the actual conduct of legislation in their own country, that representatives vote as directed by their party caucus. But in fact there are few, if any, nations with a popular government where the votes on public measures are cast so little on party lines as in the United States. In Congress it frequently happens that the Republicans or the Democrats, and sometimes both of them, disagree among themselves, the members of the same party voting on opposite sides; and this is even more true as a rule in the state legislatures. Some years ago the writer compiled statistics on this subject for the House of Commons and for Congress at different periods, and for some of the typical state legislatures. The results showed that in the House of Commons the votes follow party lines much more strictly than in either branch of Congress, and vastly more than in most of the state legislatures; and that this tendency in Parliament has steadily increased.* The popular impression is probably due in part to the control in some places of a boss over the men he has caused to be elected to a

* Annual Report of the American Historical Association for 1901. A summary of the results is also given in the writer's *Government of England*, chap. xxxv.

state legislature. But these never include all the members of the party in that body, and the business of the boss relates almost wholly to private and personal affairs. He interferes little with purely public questions. It is due also, and perhaps chiefly, to the activity of politicians in matters with which they are not properly concerned, and to the extreme degree of control by the party machinery over nominations for almost all public offices. These things have irritated reformers, and caused them to suppose that the fetters of party extend into regions where they are in fact weak. Perceiving that — save for the less important local offices, especially in the smaller communities — a citizen has very rarely a chance of election unless he is nominated by a party and wears the party label, they are inclined to assume that a party organization directs his action after election. They fail to observe that in many important measures in the state legislatures, and even in Congress, the parties as such take no part at all, the bills being prepared by committees on which both parties are represented and which do not divide on party lines. They fail to note also that on distinctly party measures, such as tariff bills, there are usually

insurgents who vote against their party on some portion if not the whole of the plan proposed. As compared with other democratic countries, the essential function of party in the United States lies not so much in presenting alternatives on public questions, as in presenting alternative candidates for election; and this is illustrated by the fact that people habitually pay less attention to the national party platforms than to the personal statements of the candidates for the presidency.

The result is that in America the people at an election express very clearly their opinion on the question which of the candidates for public offices on the whole they prefer. This is not less true of representatives in Congress and the state legislatures than of a president or governor. The choice may not be between good alternatives, but between them, such as they are, the voters really make a choice. Nor is this a matter of small consequence. In every nation it is of vital importance that the public should know who the authorities are and what is the extent of their powers. Any uncertainty on such matters greatly weakens the government and may lead to anarchy or civil war. The confusion, strife, and suffering

caused by a disputed succession under a monarchy may be seen in the Wars of the Roses in England; and history is full of such examples. Had it not been for the moderation and patriotism of both candidates, and of all the leading statesmen, the contested election of Hayes and Tilden might have involved very serious consequences in the United States. In a monarchy it is essential that the rules of succession should be clearly ascertained; in a democracy that the method of selecting the chief magistrates should be free from ambiguity, and if the election is made by popular vote that it should so far as possible be the expression of a real choice by the electorate.

On the other hand, the alternatives on questions of public policy not being precise, the platforms of the two parties rarely presenting a perfectly definite issue, the people at the polls express as a rule somewhat vague and confused sentiments rather than distinct opinions. Lord Bryce declared that public opinion rules in the United States more than in almost any other country, but except when the Referendum is used it does so less by actual votes than by the pressure it exerts on public men who are listening

for it. An example of the way a particular question may be confused and misinterpreted in the complex problems of a general election, even when made a prominent issue in the campaign, may be seen in the events of 1920. Ratification of the Treaty of Versailles and the League of Nations with reservations having failed, many Republican senators who had voted for the reservations, and for ratification of the treaty after they had been adopted, drifted, in their opposition to President Wilson, into a general attitude of direct hostility to the League. The Democratic campaign was conducted on the issue of the League, and therefore politicians assumed that the overwhelming Republican victory at the polls indicated that the people disapproved of such a League and preferred a strict policy of national isolation; whereas in fact the victory seems to have meant that the majority of the people desired to be rid of the Democratic administration, and would have elected a Republican candidate on almost any platform. On the policy of coöperating with other nations for the maintenance of peace the Republicans themselves were much divided, and it is by no means improbable that a majority of the people favored it, or would have

done so if the Republicans had proposed some plan for it. In fact after President Harding came into office a wide-spread popular demand for a conference on disarmament by international agreement strengthened the hand of those leaders in the party who wanted it, with the result that the President and Secretary Hughes were heartily supported by public opinion in calling the conference and negotiating treaties, which, whatever other effect they may have, are quite inconsistent with any thorough-going principle of national isolation.

Parties in England

To a great extent the same conditions are true in all popular governments; but in some ways there are marked contrasts. In England politics, ever since the outbreak of the war, have been in an abnormal state, and it is as yet too early to know what permanent changes have been brought about, so that the normal effects of democracy there can be observed only as they existed before that conflict. Speaking therefore of the condition before the war, it may be said that when at a national election the Englishman voted for a member of the House of Commons the really

important question he found himself called upon to decide was whether he preferred the existing cabinet or the opposition. That was the real alternative presented to the nation, although personal and local considerations no doubt affected some part of the voters. One of the reasons, indeed, why party machinery for the nomination of parliamentary candidates has been less developed there than in the United States, is that it has been less needed to keep the party together; the overmastering and ever-present issue being the momentous one of sustaining or opposing the cabinet in office. Every vote in the House of Commons adverse to the cabinet weakened its prestige, and every hostile vote on an important question was a call upon it to resign. Therefore on all matters in which the ministers were interested — and practically that meant on all questions of moment — a member almost invariably voted with his party for the cabinet or the opposition whenever his vote would make any difference in the result. It would be going much too far to say that a member of the House of Commons, like a member of the Electoral College for the choice of the President of the United States, exercised no personal discretion, voting as

he had been elected to vote; yet there has been a considerable resemblance in their positions. The cabinet, in deciding upon its course of action, no doubt took into account the opinions of the various members of its party, who together formed, of course, a majority in the House, but after it had decided they had as a rule to follow. The policy of the cabinet was known by the course it pursued, by the measures it introduced into Parliament, and, on issues still unsettled, by its declarations, especially during a general election; while the policy of the opposition was known in a similar way by its attitude in Parliament and the statements of its leaders at election time. The people therefore decided by their ballots between the alternatives or contrasted policies thus presented; and although each of these alternatives involved a number of distinct matters — on some of which a voter might agree with one of the parties, and on others with its opponent — there was often one question that predominated. For a score of years, indeed, before the war it was the habit to say that the successful party had received a mandate for the subject on which the election chiefly turned, and to complain of its assuming to deal with a matter

of grave importance which was not above the horizon at that time.

A general election in England has been a choice between two policies, that of the cabinet and that of the opposition. Of course it has been also to some extent a choice between the members of the cabinet and leaders of the opposition. But here again there is a contrast with the United States. Americans practically vote for a particular man as president with a definite substitute if he becomes incapacitated; but the English cabinet has always consisted of a group of men with different qualities, virtues, defects, and shades of opinion. Sometimes the leader of the party has been such an outstanding figure that in the public eye he stood as its embodiment, and the vote for the party really meant a vote for him. This was true in the long duel between Gladstone and Disraeli. In 1880 when a general election had given a majority to the Liberals, Queen Victoria, who did not like Mr. Gladstone, taking advantage of the fact that he had previously retired from politics, asked Lord Hartington to form a cabinet; but she was told that no one but Mr. Gladstone could be the Liberal Prime Minister if he were willing to accept. Such

cases, however, of a predominant popular leader, are rare, either in the cabinet or the opposition; and there is no principle requiring the Prime Minister, like the President of the United States, to be designated by a convention of his party. When Mr. Gladstone retired in 1894, no need was felt of referring the choice of his successor to the Liberals of the country, and without consulting them Lord Rosebery was selected by the members of the party in Parliament. By the same process at Lord Salisbury's death Mr. Balfour was appointed to succeed him, and at Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's death Mr. Asquith was selected with no suggestion of a popular vote. In fact there have been continual changes in the personnel of cabinets, and although the people as the result of an election have placed a certain group of men in office, they are not deemed to have voted for the individuals, but for the leaders of the party, whoever at any time they may be.

These statements are very general, touching merely the main outlines and leaving out of sight many qualifying considerations; yet they bring out the point that in the alternatives presented to the people at an election in the United States the primary matter is the choice between men,

representing, of course, the principles of their respective parties; while in England the main question has been the choice between policies, distinctly less consideration being usually paid to the persons who are entrusted with carrying out the policy preferred.

Parties in France

Let us take a third typical democracy on a large scale. In France there are two grades of political groupings, as on the ocean there is sometimes a long ground swell and smaller, but more mobile, waves caused by the immediate direction of the wind. The French political divisions corresponding to the ground swell are found throughout the mass of the people; while those that correspond to the smaller waves are the groups in the Chamber of Deputies, which have little or no existence in the country at large.* The ordinary citizen knows whether he favors a monarchy, the existing kind of republic, or some form of socialism; but since the monarchists have for many years

* The study by Viscount Bryce on this subject is highly illuminating. *Modern Democracies*, vol. I, pp. 264–270. I have tried to explain some of the organic causes for the subdivision into groups in France in *Governments and Parties in Continental Europe*, vol. I, chap. II.

been few, and the men who call themselves socialists are of many shades, while the great bulk of the people support the present form of republic, popular opinions on these fundamental subjects have comparatively little effect on current legislation. Popular opinion certainly secures the republic against the danger of being overturned, either by reactionaries or revolutionists, and that former source of anxiety has now disappeared. The voter knows also whether he is in a general way conservative or radical, and, without a direct national issue on the question, he expresses his opinion by his vote among the numerous candidates for the Chamber of Deputies from his district. The views thus expressed determine the general complexion of that body, and hence in a vague way the policy it will pursue; but except for the candidates of the extreme Right and Left there is usually no sharp national alternative presented, nor are the candidates elected, as in England, to support or oppose the ministry of the day.

When the Chamber meets the members inscribe themselves in one of the many political groups, but these have by no means always a fixed policy, nor is the allegiance to them neces-

sarily permanent. The ministry in order to remain in office must have the support of a majority in the Chamber, and therefore of several groups. The support of these bodies is, however, temporary, so that the ministry is liable to be upset at any time on a question that may not possess grave importance. When the ministry resigns another is formed, partly of the old members, partly of new ones, and sustained by some of the groups that upheld its predecessor and by some that did not. A change of ministry, therefore, does not usually involve a radical change of policy. It is not as in England a reversal of political direction, a substitution for the party in power of the party in opposition. It is a shuffling of the cards, which may mean little. In England when such a change takes place in the course of a Parliament, it is followed by a dissolution and a fresh election, whereby the people decide whether the party that has taken office shall retain power or the party formerly in office shall return. But the French Chamber of Deputies is never dissolved, and changes of ministry always take place several times during its term, often at short intervals. From this rough sketch of political habits it is obvious that the French people ex-

press an opinion upon the person or persons who are to be responsible for the administration of the country distinctly less than the English, and far less than the Americans; that they express an opinion on the concrete policy to be pursued less than the Americans and much less than the English. The reason is that the groups in the Chamber, which are the controlling forces in current French politics, are not truly national parties, standing solidly at elections for definite programmes or for a specified ministry. They cannot do this because they are too numerous and too small. No one of them can hope to command by itself a majority in the Chamber, and therefore none of them can declare what it will do if placed in power. No one of them can say to the people, "Vote for us, and if successful we will give effect to such and such a policy." The best they can say is, "Vote for us, and we will strive to make with other groups such a combination as will, so far as possible, give effect to our views." Wherever there are a number of small political groups the voters cannot be offered a choice between a pair of alternatives, and therefore have difficulty in forming and expressing an opinion on the conduct of public affairs. They are in the

position of the travellers faced by a number of paths. They know that they do not want to take the ones farthest to the right or to the left, but among the others they find it impossible to reach a collective opinion, or, what for political purposes is decisive, a common opinion of a majority. Owing to the lack of a single pair of alternatives between which they can choose, the French people can decide on the policy to be pursued, and on the men who shall carry it out, less than the people in England or the United States.

The inconvenience caused by a number of small groups has, in some countries where they exist, led to an effort to associate all the groups that support the government in a stable combination, not only when the legislature is in session, but also at elections. This was notably the case in Germany for some years before the war. The object was, of course, to enable the administration to count on a solid majority. But in bringing the association, or "bloc" as it is called, to assume something approaching the position of a national party, which aimed at a combined majority at the polls, the opposition was consolidated also. This placed distinctly before the electorate the question of supporting

or opposing the existing administration; and it was in part the rapidly growing size of the opposition vote, and the consequent fear on the part of the government that it would lose its hold on the mass of the German people, which precipitated the war.

Cross Lines of Political Cleavage

The purpose of this brief glance at political parties in the United States, England and France is to illustrate the fact that in so far as a numerous people are called upon to decide questions, whether in the choice of candidates for the offices of the state, or in matters of public policy, there is a tendency to divide into two parties. If the object of democracy be to ascertain and give effect to public opinion the reason for the tendency is obvious, because only between a single pair of alternatives can the electorate form and express an intelligent opinion. Moreover, it is natural; because under ordinary conditions any man who cares to have his vote count for something positive will be inclined to cast it for one or other of the two principal parties, instead of giving it to a smaller body that has no substantial chance of achieving its object. But if this be true why

should more than two parties exist in a large democracy? In France there are numerous groups because the people do not really attempt to decide either who shall be at the head of the national administration, or what policy shall be pursued; but why should third parties exist in the United States or in England, where the voters are called upon to decide one, or both, of these things?

It may be observed that, except to some extent for the reactionary Monarchists at one extreme and those Socialists who represent the interests of labor at the other, the groups in the French Chamber are concerned with questions of general politics, not with special subjects or particular interests. The member of a group, or the constituents who vote for him, may, no doubt, be influenced by local or personal interests, but the group purports to be actuated by motives affecting the general welfare, and it certainly takes an active part in all the questions that arise, not merely with special or local ones. Although not national parties in the sense of existing in the mass of the people, the groups are organized to deal with all national questions, professedly on the basis of the public welfare. This is true also

of the two principal parties in England and the United States, but it is not true of permanent third parties there. I say permanent third parties because temporary ones, based like the two principal parties professedly on general interests, have occasionally resulted from the confusion following the breaking up of one of the older organizations. This occurred in England after Sir Robert Peel, by proposing the repeal of the Corn Laws, cleft the Conservative party in twain; and again when Mr. Gladstone, by advocating Home Rule for Ireland, did the same for the Liberals. It happened in America when the Whig party broke up over the question of slavery; when the Democrats split over the question of the free coinage of silver; and finally when Mr. Roosevelt became the presidential candidate of the Progressive Republicans. But groupings of this kind have proved ephemeral. Third parties that have long endured in English-speaking countries have been commonly due to people who considered a single subject of such paramount importance as to organize separately to promote their views thereon, and have thus caused cross divisions with more than one line of cleavage. Such was the small Prohibition party in America

which for many years made independent nominations, although in other respects its members were not dissatisfied with one or other of the leading parties. Of this nature also are the racial parties, which in many European countries, and most markedly in Austria, have cut across the divisions based on other issues.

In the United States third parties have been small, or have before long been absorbed by the larger bodies, but this has not been true everywhere. In Germany before the war there were three distinct and enduring lines of party cleavage: political policy, represented by the various kinds of Conservatives, by the more moderate groups and the Socialists; race, represented by the Poles, the Danes and the men from Alsace-Lorraine; and religion, represented by the Catholic Centre. The " Bloc " was an association of the conservative and moderate groups that supported the government with the Centre; the others being in opposition. In England there have been for many years three lines of cleavage: general political policy, dividing the Conservatives from the Liberals; the special interests of the workingmen, represented by the Labor Party, which, while acting in general, but not

uninterrupted, accord with the Liberals, maintained its separate organization; and racial or local desire for autonomy in the case of the Irish Nationalists. These cross divisions, like independent variables in an algebraic equation, make solutions difficult. With the creation of the Free State in Ireland one line of cleavage will disappear from English politics. Whether labor will prove to be a permanent basis for a separate party organization, and if so how far it will modify the parliamentary system, is a deeply interesting problem, on which it would be rash to venture a prophecy. The present political conditions in England, as will be pointed out later, are abnormal and until they return to somewhere near an equilibrium it is difficult to foresee the future. There are at present no signs that a distinct representation of Labor will vanish. In fact a Labor ministry is spoken of as possible in the not remote future. If that means an administration representing the workingmen as a class, it may under the exigencies of parliamentary government signify eventually a division of the nation into two parties, one consisting of wage earners with their supporters, and its opponent of the other classes in the community. This would

be a grave misfortune, for a division on class lines means an open antagonism of interests, a strife of groups confessedly based on coöperative selfishness. That such a conflict of interests exists in every highly developed industrial country is no doubt true, but the hope of democracy lies in reconciling conflicting interests by independent opinion strong enough to compel mutual concessions for the general benefit. An avowed division of political parties on the basis of class interests inflames the conflict, and takes out of public life whatever of aspiration for the common welfare might be present. With all his defects Disraeli clung, throughout his whole career, to the conviction that political parties ought not to be based on class, that the lines of cleavage should be vertical, not horizontal, and he did much in his day to bring about that result. The United States has been saved from the danger of class lines of cleavage in national politics in large part by sectional divergencies, although in other respects these have been a source of difficulty.

A serious disadvantage in cross lines of cleavage arises from the fact that like other presentations of more than a single pair of alternatives they have a tendency to falsify the expression of public

opinion. In extreme cases no one would deny this. It can hardly be doubted that the racial parties in Austria before the war interfered seriously with the proper solution of questions of general public importance which might otherwise have taken place. The existence in Germany of the Centre or Catholic Party, which was willing to support the government in return for concessions to its special interest, may well have had an important influence in maintaining the military policy, and thereby promoting the course that led to disaster for the country. In a lesser degree a similar distortion of opinion may be produced anywhere. Republicans in the United States, who voted the Prohibition ticket, might by so doing at some time have elected the Democratic candidate whom they did not want, and yet not have helped the cause of prohibition. There are occasions when, as a protest, votes can wisely be thrown away so far as the direct effect is concerned. This may be true when both the parties are in a bad condition, or refuse to take up an important issue, and the moral result may be of the highest value. But if such a condition is permanent, and if it be true that a real public opinion can be expressed only by a choice between a

single pair of alternatives, then democracy, that is government by public opinion, is not in sound health, and the disease may prove incurable.

The Direct Primary

In connection with the proper function of political parties in presenting alternatives to the people we may consider an institution from which much was hoped in the United States, but which has proved disappointing, — that is the direct primary for the nomination of candidates for public office. Its aim was to reduce the excessive control of the party organizations, or "machines," over the selection of the candidates, and in this it has to some extent succeeded, but it has shown defects that have greatly cooled the enthusiasm it once evoked. Its object is to ascertain the general opinion of the party members on the man most fit to represent them, instead of leaving it to a small body of active politicians. But as already pointed out a large body of people cannot spontaneously form or express an opinion about the representative they prefer. Unless they are to make a choice among a very few, and preferably only two, persons the result will be merely to scatter their votes in a way to produce

confusion, not opinion. Moreover in order that there should be a real choice between two or more persons each of them must be presented with such a backing as to attract popular attention with a considerable chance of success. In other words they must ordinarily in a large constituency have behind them organized support. But the regular party organization as such cannot support any candidate at a direct primary. If it did so the very object of the primary would be defeated. A new temporary organization must be provided for each aspirant, who must therefore himself, or through his friends, create an organization of his own. The expense of doing so increases the influence of money in politics; but apart from this, the proceeding does not place the candidate in the best relation to the members of his party, nor are alternatives presented to them of a nature to evoke the most valuable kind of opinion. If the choice is one not of policy, but of persons — and the personal question always enters in to a large extent — the supporters of each of the rivals not only extol the merits of their favorite, but decry the other, and the vote is quite as likely to be affected by repulsion for one candidate as by admiration of the other; and yet when the choice is

made all the members of the party are expected to join in supporting the successful man against the nominee of the other party. In theory the alternative is which of two good men the voters of the party prefer; in practice the vote of the minority at the primary often means that they do not want for office a man for whom they are called on to vote at the final election. During the campaign preceding the nomination they criticise and condemn him; during the campaign preceding the election they seek to praise and defend him. In such a case, their ballots at the election are hardly an expression of their real opinion. If, on the other hand, the choice is between men standing for different policies the same difficulty arises. The minority votes against a certain view at the primary and for it at the election, and hence on one occasion or the other they are not expressing their genuine opinion on that issue.

It may be urged that the proceeding is used merely to ascertain the preference of the party on questions of persons and policies; that the voters at the primary are not deciding whether they approve or disapprove of a person or policy, but, assuming that on the whole they believe a victory by their party is in the general interest,

they express their opinion about the person by whom they prefer to have it represented, and about some subordinate points of policy. It may be urged also that this same procedure takes place in a party convention, and that is true. But there are two differences between a committee, or even a large convention, and a direct primary. The former is able to discuss the merits of candidates, and if this is not done publicly at any rate the members can confer with one another and exchange views. They can eliminate persons suggested against whom there are grave objections, and compromise on a candidate whose policy is not extreme; whereas at a direct primary the voters can merely choose between the names presented to them. Hence the committee or convention can seek to select a candidate and a policy on which the members of the party can combine, but the direct primary cannot. The second difference is akin to this. It is that the committee or convention is aware that until final action its procedure is tentative. The members, in striving to make their personal desires prevail, are consciously expressing a preference, with a willingness to accept the next best if they cannot get what they prefer. At the first ballot a dele-

gate votes for A, at the next for B, then for C, and if C is nominated he has voted for him. C is his candidate although he would have preferred A. Finally, unless a serious matter of moral principle is involved, all the members, whether they voted for C or not, can, without loss of self-respect, vote to make his nomination unanimous as the best candidate on whom they can all agree. But at the direct primary there is only one ballot, and the members of the party are there, not to agree upon a candidate, but to choose between alternatives, hard and fast, cut and dried beforehand. Their attitude of mind is therefore different. They come, not to express a tentative preference, but a final opinion. They do not habitually attend in as large numbers as at the election, because the success of the party, in which they are chiefly interested, is not at stake; but the attitude of those who do attend is much the same as at an election. Whether, therefore, the device is a necessity in the actual state of party machinery or not, it is safe to assert that as a method of selecting the candidate and policy on which the members of the party can most nearly agree, the direct primary is based upon a wrong principle.

Summary

The propositions which this chapter seeks to set forth are that, whether for good or for evil, political parties in every large democracy are, under ordinary circumstances, unavoidable; that this is the more true the larger the size of the electorate, if the holders of the chief political offices and the policy to be pursued are to be determined by public opinion; that the normal function of the parties is to present for popular choice alternative candidates and policies; and that public opinion on these matters is on the whole most truly expressed if the choice lies between a single pair of alternatives. It was pointed out that everywhere the parties perform this function imperfectly, sometimes very imperfectly; and that the extent to which they perform it varies a great deal in different countries. In the United States the parties are more concerned with nominating candidates for office than with presenting definite alternative policies; in England as a rule they deal at elections more with questions of policy and less with the personal matters; while in France, the groups in the Chamber of Deputies, which determine the character of the ministry

and the course of legislation, are not national parties in the same sense, and hence public opinion has a less direct influence upon national affairs than in either the United States or England. It was further suggested that the existence of more than two enduring national parties was commonly due to cross lines of division founded upon special, as distinguished from general, political issues. In conclusion certain criticisms of the direct primary were offered on the ground of its inconsistency with the normal and proper functions of parties.

In considering the defects of party government it must not be forgotten that a part of their imperfection lies in the nature of the case. Government by party would be a defective instrument even if the leaders were all men of the highest integrity and intelligence; for in presenting alternatives for popular choice they not only help to form, but also to limit the scope, and distort the expression, of public opinion. The prophets of democracy thought of it as a simple form of government, but it has proved extremely complex, perhaps the most difficult of all to work. The object here is not to estimate its merits and shortcomings, but to try to comprehend the laws that

control the formation of the public opinion on which it is assumed to rest. So far we have considered normal conditions in peaceful times. Let us turn to the state of public opinion under the stress of war, and in the period that follows a great war.

CHAPTER V

PUBLIC OPINION IN WAR

The Direct Effect of War

War has an immediate effect upon the attitude of mind of everyone who is brought into connection with it. The end to be attained supersedes the motives of ordinary life. Those things that before had been primary objects become secondary to the winning of the victory. As the immediate aim is destroying the army of the enemy, and the means involve the risk and sacrifice of the lives of one's own soldiers, the sacredness of life, paramount in peace, loses its relative importance. In peace a single brigand can hold up and rob all the passengers in a stagecoach, or keep at bay a number of men while he carries off the pay-roll of a factory. If they were to rush upon him in a mass they could easily overpower him, but in doing so some of them would be shot, and no one feels justified in taking the risk, or certainty, of death to prevent the robbery. In war, on the contrary, the risk of life is an obvious part of the

soldier's duty, and is taken without hesitation. Property in the area of military operations incurs a similar risk. There is no greater contrast than that between firemen striving to save a building and soldiers setting fire to one that may afford protection to an enemy. Individual liberty is also to a greater or less degree subordinated to the main purpose of the time. In the army itself this is self-evident. Military efficiency requires complete unity of action, and therefore a concentration of direction much greater and more rapid than in any peaceful industry. In an effort where many lives may depend upon absolute obedience of orders, discipline is enforced by stringent methods and drastic punishments. Every soldier must be ready to risk his life at any moment in fulfilling without question orders the object of which are to him entirely unknown. Moreover no military action can take place without some sacrifice of life, and hence every officer in the exercise of his discretion about the orders to be given to his command asks himself, not as an industrial employer would do, how danger to life can be avoided, but whether the object to be attained is worth the probable loss of life among his own men in attaining it. Life, liberty and the pursuit of

happiness, declared by constitutions to be the primary rights of man, become in war relative instead of absolute rights. Such an attitude of mind is sometimes ascribed to the brutalizing effect of war upon the men who fight. But whatever may have been true of the regular or mercenary troops of the past that is not the case at present. In almost all countries now the rank and file, and in great modern wars vastly the larger part of both officers and men, are drawn for a short time from civil life to which they return after it is over. Everyone today has seen enough of men who fought in the World War to know that, although the normal attitude of the community does not at once return with peace, good men are not brutalized, have not lost their regard for the pursuits of peace and the refinements of civilization, or become unfitted for civil life. When civilians enlist in time of war their change of attitude takes place, not after long experience of army life and of battles, but almost at once; and it is due to a new orientation, a recognition of a different and paramount object, transcending in immediate importance the former ones. It is the result, in short, of a radical change in the focus of attention.

Moreover the change of sentiment is not confined to the army. The men and women who stay at home also assume a new attitude on the outbreak of a war that requires a great national effort. They are often no less ready than soldiers to restrict liberty when it threatens weakness in the contest. They do not shudder at reports of the loss of thousands of lives of their fellow citizens in a victorious battle, as they would at the loss of scores in an accident in a mine or a flood in time of peace. They delight to work and deny themselves comforts in a way they would otherwise think intolerable, and this is quite as true among people habitually pacific as of those more familiar with martial customs. If we can trust the statements from sources apparently reliable, rich people in Germany were less inclined to support their forces in the field by voluntary compliance with rules for the distribution of food than the same classes in some of the less military nations with which they were at war.* No doubt this was in part due to the greater scarcity of food, but also probably to the fact that the con-

* The description by the Princess Blücher of the conduct of some German ladies, when required to furnish a list of their stores of meat, seems to confirm this impression. *An English Wife in Berlin*, p. 155.

duct of the war was regarded there as the affair of the military authorities, while in some other countries it assumed more the aspect of a struggle in which the whole people took voluntarily an active part.

This brings us to the difference between most former wars and those which are waged today. When wars were fought by comparatively small standing armies, the parts of the country that lay within the field of actual hostilities were liable to be fearfully ravaged, but this was usually not a large area and the destruction was rarely systematic; while the rest of the nation felt the immediate pressure of the conflict mainly by the attempts of the government to raise men and money to carry it on. The struggles even between great states were on a relatively small scale. For the most part they were wars of the governments rather than of peoples. If we compare, for example, the condition of the peoples of England and France in the War of the Spanish Succession and in the recent World War, the difference is apparent. In the former conflict a much smaller proportion of the population was in military service than two hundred years later. There was nothing like the universal effort of all

classes of men and women to work for the war, to throw into the struggle every resource the nation could command. The instances are typical, for although wars have at all epochs differed in magnitude and intensity, those of recent times have tended peculiarly to call out the whole energy of the people. This is due in part to more complete organization of nations in war, resulting from the Prussian device of universal military service; in part to the vast progress of scientific discoveries and mechanical inventions applicable to war, with their enormous demand for labor behind the lines to keep the fighting force efficient; and in part to the fearful destructiveness of modern weapons which makes everyone appreciate the horrors of invasion. The very fact, moreover, that the whole population take an active part increases the universal feeling that the war is a vital struggle for the country, in which everyone has much at stake; and it feeds the sentiment of national hatred so marked in the recent conflict. In this war the Germans made the mistake, not only of inflaming the wrath of the English by acts like the execution of Miss Cavell and Captain Fryatt, but also, in the vain hope of intimidating them, of shelling the coast towns and dropping bombs

on London from the air, attacks which had no military value, but, by making the country feel that its security was threatened, helped to fill the armies and strengthen the determination to win at any cost. A wise man does not expect to intimidate bees by poking a stick into their hive, even if he thinks of bees rather as industrial than martial creatures.

Absence of Alternatives in Modern War

In wars that do not threaten the security of the nation, that do not call forth its utmost resources, a difference of opinion about the wisdom and rightfulness of the war may be tolerated. A man who expresses disapproval does not seriously endanger the safety of the state, because it is not in peril. He detracts to some extent from the national power, but if there is a safe margin of force above that required for victory, or if defeat will not be a national calamity, his opinions are not a grave peril. If the war is not for self-preservation, does not involve the vital interests of the country, but is fought to extend or maintain exterior domination, men may openly disagree about the propriety of the war as they do about

questions of domestic policy that excite strong feelings. In such a case there may be no attempt to suppress opposition to the war by force. But if the integrity of the nation is at stake, if a defeat will mean ruining or crippling it, or subjecting it to foreign domination, and its utmost exertions are required to prevent disaster, the position of one who opposes the war, and thereby impedes the fullest use of the whole national power, assumes the form of hostility, not only to the government, but to the state itself. Thus in England there was open opposition to the war against the revolting colonies in America, to the Crimean War and to the Boer War, all of them struggles to maintain or extend English supremacy which did not involve the safety of the British Isles. But the situation was quite different in the World War, where opposition to its prosecution became intolerable from the moment that its magnitude was understood. Something of the same contrast may be observed in America between the Mexican and Spanish Wars, and even to some extent the Civil War, on one side, and the World War on the other. Although in the Civil War maintenance of the Union was the issue, the security of the northern states, that were striving to subdue

the South, was not in jeopardy; and opposition to the war, like opposition fifteen years earlier to the Mexican War, was openly expressed. A northern Democrat remarked long afterwards to the writer, that at the time of the Civil War he had felt that when the last man was needed he would enlist, but that his party had not made the war, and that those who had made it ought to do the fighting. Such a sentiment had no place in the World War; for Americans, by the time they entered into this last struggle, realized that a German victory would be a calamity for the civilization to which they belonged, and highly dangerous to the future security of their country. It was fortunate that both in England and the United States the war was declared by the party whose tendencies and temper would naturally have inclined it in the opposite direction; but even had this not been the case, substantially the whole people would have rallied to the support of the government as soon as the necessity for the utmost national effort became clear.

Now any war at the present day between countries which are at all evenly matched endangers the national safety so much as to call forth the entire resources of the people; and with the con-

stantly growing range and destructiveness of weapons, with the increasing power to organize the whole community for military effectiveness, this is likely to become more rather than less true in the future. Under such conditions opposition to a war, or to the means essential for carrying it on, appears treasonable, because it entails a weakening of the nation in the face of a life and death struggle with the enemy. No alternative to the vigorous prosecution of the conflict can be urged which does not savor of disloyalty. The single object, in which all good citizens must concur, is that of winning the war. Nor, save in exceptional conditions, can any opposition to the measures the government deems necessary for the purpose appear thoroughly loyal, because the means required for securing victory involve a military problem to be determined by the executive and military authorities responsible for the result, and the public must support with all its power the decisions reached whether it is convinced of their wisdom or not. Before war is declared there may be opposition thereto, because an alternative is then possible which is not disloyal or treasonable to the nation; but after a country is actually engaged in a war which calls

forth all its resources this ceases to be the case. No patriotic alternative to carrying it on, and carrying it on with the greatest energy, can then be presented, until the struggle has continued for a long time and the combatants are exhausted; until it is evident that the security and vital interests of the nation are no longer at stake, and that peace can be made without imperilling them. When such a point is reached it may not be disloyal to urge that the sacrifices of the nation in continuing the war are greater than any benefits it can gain. In the World War there was never a time when a rational and concrete alternative to the prosecution of the conflict could have been proposed which the great majority of the people in the allied countries would not have deemed disloyal. It would have been an admission of defeat, and so long as there was a danger of German victory the Allies had to fight to the bitter end. If the Germans, instead of making their attacks in the spring of 1918, had abandoned the hope of an offensive victory, retired during the previous winter within their own western frontiers, to fight a defensive campaign; and if by so doing they had succeeded, as they well might, in beating off attacks until the following winter, it

is not impossible that the Allies, no longer fearing a German victory, might in their exhausted condition have doubted the wisdom of sacrificing more men and money in striving to crush the enemy, and if so Germany might have obtained better terms of peace.

An illustration of the difference of attitude towards war at the present day and in former times is furnished by the question of conscription. At the time of the Civil War the draft in the North was regarded as a drastic, if necessary, measure; and it caused riots, which assumed in New York such a serious character that for four days the mob was in control of a large part of the city and was suppressed only by military force. In countries unaccustomed to a system of compulsory military service, especially among English-speaking peoples, conscription had hitherto been generally looked upon as a legal possibility, to be adopted only in case of the gravest danger, and certainly not as an ordinary accompaniment of war. In this war England and Canada did, indeed, resort to it, but not until a vast army of volunteers had been recruited, and had proved insufficient. Australia, much farther from the battle front, and feeling the danger less, refused to

enact it. But when the United States entered the war the magnitude of the struggle had become apparent and conscription was at once adopted with general approval. To almost all Englishmen and Americans the idea that a great war ought to be fought and the country defended only by voluntary enlistment seems now as irrational as to maintain that the cost of war should be defrayed only by persons who volunteer to pay taxes for the purpose. In every future war, of such a character as to require the full national resources, it is probable that conscription will be adopted as a matter of course. When there is open political opposition to the prosecution of a war, when people are profoundly divided on the subject, a natural repugnance forbids compelling people who do not believe in the cause to die for it; but when substantially the whole people feel the necessity of winning the war, when opposition to its effective prosecution is almost universally regarded as disloyal, when the welfare of all is generally believed to be at stake, there is no injustice in compelling all men to share equally in the labors and dangers of the conflict.

These conditions in modern wars conducted on a vast scale, as illustrated in the recent World

War, are due to the absence of an alternative that does not appear disloyal, that is, of any patriotic alternative. Popular government is based upon the theory that the decisions upon all important questions of public policy are to be controlled by public opinion, and since the opinions of all the citizens do not coincide, this means that the preponderating opinion shall prevail. Now in order that the formation and expression of opinion shall be free there must be liberty to present and argue the alternatives between which the public can choose, either directly, as at an election, or by less formal methods. But after a nation has become engaged in a war that strains its utmost resources, the government must assume that there is no difference of opinion, that the people are unanimous in desiring to have everything done which will promote success, for if not the nation cannot put forth its full strength. Laws of unusual severity are passed; expressions of opinion that in ordinary times would pass for harmless vagaries are heavily punished; criticism of the main policy of the government, the proposal of an alternative that in peace would be perfectly legitimate, may be treated by the authorities, and are certainly regarded by the public, as

little short of treasonable. Macaulay in his essay on William Pitt blames him for the severity of the laws enacted against political heretics during the French Revolution and the wars that followed, and for the harshness with which they were enforced. The reason, or excuse, for Pitt's action lay in the fact that these wars involved a strain upon England to which she had never before been subjected, and which was not contemplated in the peaceful political philosophy of either Pitt or Macaulay. No doubt under a strain of this kind the treatment of malcontents is likely to be carried too far. No doubt there are cases of grave injustice for which no sufficient excuse can be given. But what we are concerned to note here is that all these things, the universal enthusiasm and self-sacrifice, the intolerance and excess, are in an exhausting war a natural result of the absence of an apparently loyal alternative to its prosecution with the utmost vigor.

Fusion of English Parties during the War

If there be no alternative to the prosecution of a war; if the only differences relate to the military methods by which it can be most effectively con-

ducted, and these must in the main be decided by the authorities that alone have full knowledge of the facts; if the immediate object be simply to concentrate the power of the whole nation on the common aim of all; then political parties have for the time no reason for existence, and the obvious thing to do is to combine their forces in a joint administration. This clearly helps to silence criticism, and consolidate the people for an intense effort. It is the logical course to pursue, and it was done in England by admitting the Conservative leaders to a coalition ministry in May, 1915. The effect was to throw the full political weight of both parties into the prosecution of the war, and enable the country to have the services of almost all its public men to whatever party they belonged. That is a result ardently desired at all times by critics of the party system, who do not see why the nation should be deprived of a capable administrator because the majority in the House of Commons disapproves the policy of his party on some point which has nothing whatever to do with his department. They ask why, for example, when the cabinet to which he belongs is defeated on Home Rule for Ireland, an excellent foreign minister should resign, to be

succeeded, perhaps, by a less competent man with the same foreign policy. The criticism would be sound if the cabinet were a mere body of experts. The fallacy lies in overlooking the nature of political office in a nation where the duty of ministers is not only to administer their departments, but collectively to direct and carry out a harmonious policy in accordance with public opinion. If it were not so their offices might be abolished, leaving the administration in the hands of their permanent undersecretaries. To make this clear requires a comprehensive study of the system as a whole, its essential conditions, limitations and defects. In England after the outbreak of the war only one policy, and one public opinion, remained,— that of conducting the struggle as effectually as possible, an object in which almost all the parties and their leaders agreed. Hence the ordinary reasons for a party cabinet ceased to exist, and in fact the creation of the coalition ministry in England greatly strengthened the hands of the government during the war. It had also another effect. Not only did it put a stop to the rivalry of the parties, bring the sentiment of both to bear on a common cause, and unite all the political forces of the

country in carrying on the struggle; but by absorbing the opposition into the administration it prevented the framing of any alternative policy, not only while the war lasted, but for years thereafter. The consequences of this we shall see later.

Parties in France during the War

In France and the United States, where there was no less resolution in the prosecution of the war, such a fusion of parties did not take place. Since in France every ministry is in fact a coalition of groups united for a time to conduct the government, the combinations constantly forming and dissolving according to the fluctuations of politics in the Chamber, it was not necessary to introduce the idea of coalition during the war, but merely to extend it for the time more generally. There could, indeed, be nothing resembling the formal coalition of the English party in power with the party in opposition, for a French ministry is not the representative of a great national party; nor is there anything corresponding to the English opposition. In England an opposition that did not criticise and oppose the government of the day would be meaningless; and in

a war like this its criticism and opposition would be injurious to the country. Hence there was every reason why, by means of coalition, a fusion of parties should take place. But in France no group need oppose the ministry. None is, as in England, elected for that purpose, but each stands for certain general points of view which may, or may not, be out of harmony with those of the ministry of the day, and may, or may not, be involved in any particular question presented to the Chamber. The system of groups could, therefore, perfectly well continue without gravely weakening the nation; and although during the earlier part of the war there was a *union sacrée* of the groups for carrying it on, the groups did not dissolve. It is, indeed, hard to see what else could have happened. If the groups had formally dissolved, and the Chamber become wholly amorphous, something very like them would have remained in the informal attachment of deputies to their various natural leaders, all of whom could not very well have been in the cabinet at the same time. In England the admission to the Liberal cabinet of Conservative and Labor leaders secured the representation and support of all fractions in the House of Commons, except

the Irish Nationalists; but with the numerous groups in the French Chamber of Deputies this would hardly have been possible. In fact the group system continued in France throughout the war, and five different ministries were in office while it lasted, the changes being due in part to dissensions among the groups, and in part to a feeling that the ministry in office was not waging the war as effectively as possible.

Parties in the United States during the War

In the United States the situation was different from that of either England or France, and the contrasts among these three illustrate the divergencies in the form of government. The President, being elected for four years with full control of the executive branch of the government, was not dependent for his administrative measures upon Congress; and as the Republicans were eager to enact any laws, and make any appropriations required for the vigorous prosecution of the war, he was not hampered in its conduct. In fact the rapidity and scale of the national mobilization was due rather to general public opinion than to the political leaders. The

position of the Republicans in Congress under a Democratic administration is, indeed, very different from that of the opposition in Parliament. The business of the opposition in England is to oppose; not, of course, to oppose everything, but in general to do so whenever a divergence of opinion is involved on which the parties may reasonably differ. The members of the opposition usually vote solidly together, and under normal conditions can, and do, constantly attack and strive to censure the government for its administrative acts. Their ordinary function is such that if pursued it would impede the cabinet seriously in conducting a war, and their presence as a consolidated body at such a time is a potential danger. But in the United States it is not the business of the party to which the President does not belong to oppose him. Even if it has a majority in both Houses of Congress it cannot turn him out of office, or shorten his term. The fact that his tenure of power does not depend upon Congress removes the chief motive that exists in the House of Commons for party solidarity, with the result that the party out of power acts less as a unit than in England and is a less formidable peril to the administration. Moreover Congress,

while able to inquire into the acts of the President and his subordinates, does so by a slow process, which has usually little effect at the time, although it may have an important influence on the next election. Owing, in short, to the separation of executive and legislative functions, there was not the same imperative reason, as in England, for a coalition; and therefore President Wilson felt less need of bringing the leaders of both parties together in his cabinet than did Mr. Asquith.

Nevertheless, he was criticised for not doing so. Whether such a step would have had much effect on the vigor of carrying on the war may be doubted, for the public pulse beat strongly at the outset, and the strain did not last long enough to require the full popular influence of both parties to keep public ardor at a high point. But his policy in this matter had serious consequences for the President himself. If on entering the war he had appointed leading Republicans to his cabinet they could hardly in such a crisis have refused; and if there had been no fatal friction with them, they would have shared his responsibility for the administration of the war to such an extent that their party would have had grave difficulty in

condemning any part of it afterwards. The opportunity for criticism given to the Republicans by the failure to appoint any of their leaders on the delegation to the Peace Conference at Paris has been generally recognized, and in a lesser degree the same thing is true of the two preceding years of active hostilities. What the results of taking Republicans into the cabinet during the war would have been it is difficult to guess. Party alignments might have been a good deal broken up, and at least it is clear that the Republicans would have lost much of the campaign material that brought them an overwhelming victory in 1920.

CHAPTER VI

PUBLIC OPINION AFTER THE WAR

Politics in France and the United States

In France the groups in the Chamber having existed throughout the war without assuming a position of antagonism to its prosecution, and hence without a charge of lack of patriotism, could continue unimpaired when it ceased, and operate as before. Of the three countries considered France was the one in which the forms of political life soonest returned to their previous condition. After the treaty of peace was made the rivalries of leaders and groups quickly revived. Clemenceau, the premier who had brought the war to a successful end and negotiated the peace, was defeated for election as President of the Republic. Short-lived ministries, relying upon the uncertain support of the Chamber of Deputies and precarious coalitions of its groups, again appeared. It is, indeed, astonishing how little the terrible experiences of the

war have changed the character of French political life. No better evidence could be found of the hold republican institutions have acquired over the nation. During the war, in the darkest hours and in the flush of victory, the commanders of the armies submitted absolutely to the civil authorities; and after the peace no desire was shown to elect a successful general to high political office. Not less notable is the fact that all this should have passed without comment. Like most people at the present day the French are by no means wholly pleased with certain aspects of their politics; but after the war the stream of public life returned quickly to its accustomed channel.

In the United States the process was equally complete, although its manifestation was not exactly the same owing to the fact that the President had still more than two years of his term remaining. The Republicans, not having been represented in the cabinet or the Conference at Paris, and having maintained their organization intact during the war, were in a position to criticise and oppose him. The elections of 1918 had given them a majority in both branches of Congress, and when the war was over they ceased to

be under any patriotic duty to sustain his administration. A point of attack was opened before long by the question of ratifying the Treaty of Versailles and the Covenant of the League of Nations. Some of the Republican senators would have none of it on any terms, some wanted amendments, while others were ready to ratify it with moderate reservations. The result is an illustration of the way the presenting, or failure to present, alternatives operates in popular government. Probably a majority of the American people then desired some method of preventing the recurrence of war. Probably a majority of Republicans would have favored heartily a league of nations for this purpose if presented by their leaders; but while there were serious objections raised to the Covenant, the Republican senators could not agree upon an alternative to the document as it stood, and therefore Republican opinion in the Senate, and still more at the election of 1920, drifted toward a mere negative. With that election the function of parties in the United States resumed its normal course, and, as in France, the forms of political action are much what they were before the war.

The Effect of Fusion in England

The political conditions in England since the armistice have been very different. The coalition that was formed to carry on the war destroyed for the time any possibility of systematic opposition to the cabinet in office. So long, indeed, as the war lasted the people had no opportunity of expressing an opinion at the polls, for by successive Acts of Parliament the term of the existing House of Commons was prolonged, and a general election postponed until the armistice. But even in the House of Commons itself no alternative policy to that of the administration could be presented, because both parties, and in fact all parties, except the Irish Nationalists, were combined in the ministry. Party government was for the time obliterated, and the control by the ministers became in its nature autocratic. The government became a small oligarchy, but unlike the oligarchy that habitually rules within a single party, the body of men in control were not checked, and constrained to agree, by the presence of a rival party ready to take advantage of their mistakes. Personal differences of opinion, personal ambitions and the desire to make one's

views prevail, sharpened by the momentous results at stake, were not discarded; and there followed, what commonly happens in an autocratic oligarchy, a contest for power among its members. Without consulting Parliament, without debate, or the presenting of alternatives for consideration, the stronger personality prevailed over the less forcible, and at the end of 1916 Mr. Lloyd George replaced Mr. Asquith as head of the cabinet. It happened that both had belonged to the same Liberal ministry before the war, but this was not essential to the change. Had the strongest, the most astute and masterful man been previously a Conservative he might have done the same thing, if the coalition of parties were sufficiently real and solid, and if he commanded the confidence of Liberal colleagues as the most effective leader in the prosecution of the war. Quite apart from any opinions that may be held about the desirability of the change of premiers, the point to be observed is this, that the coalition of parties had abolished the choice by Parliament between alternatives, had thereby deprived it of effective control, and brought in personal government by a group of men composed of the former leaders of both parties.

It is a noteworthy incident in the loss by Parliament of the authority which in ordinary times it possesses over the executive, at least potentially, that contrary to the traditional English custom, men holding positions of great responsibility at the heads of departments were not members of either House. One hardly knows whether to call them ministers or not. In ordinary times they would certainly be so classed; but the disturbance in official conditions caused by the exigencies of war, and by the fusion of parties, was so great that the sharp distinction between ministers and other holders of public office became obscured. A corresponding change took place within the cabinet itself. Ordinarily that body decides all important questions, and is collectively responsible to the House of Commons for the decisions that it makes. But after the coalition took place responsibility to Parliament virtually ceased. Instead of being parliamentary the government became personal, and finally was for practical purposes concentrated in the dominating personality of Mr. Lloyd George, who formed inside the ministry a small directing war cabinet consisting of himself and three or four of his principal colleagues. While the war lasted,

and it was necessary to concentrate all the resources of the nation in a gigantic effort under a single and forcible control, such a departure from the traditional forms of English government was probably beneficial, if not absolutely necessary; and even when, after the war was over, a cabinet of the old type was formally restored it was not unnatural that for a time the political conditions should remain substantially unchanged.

The actual configuration of political parties is always to some extent accidental and artificial. The conception of parties as based wholly on natural divisions of opinion and interests, in which every man finds his place according to his rational attitude toward public questions, is, as has already been observed, too simple to be true. Party divisions and affiliations are in part historic, in part sentimental, and largely affected by the attraction and repulsion of dominant personalities. It follows that any disruption or fusion of parties causes new alignments. The lines of separation cannot return to the old grooves. As in the case of a flood in an alluvial soil the subsiding waters do not recede quite into the old channels, but in part follow new ones they have carved. This has often been true in English history. At

the close of the wars of Napoleon parties reformed, but not on the lines of the eighteenth century. After the split in the ranks of the Conservatives, caused by the repeal of the Corn Laws under Sir Robert Peel, most of the members of Parliament who followed him became permanently detached from the old party, and after calling themselves Liberal-Conservatives for a time, gravitated into the ranks of the Liberals. A similar process followed the split of the Liberals over Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule Bill, — save that his supporters retained control of the party, and his opponents under the name of Liberal-Unionists maintained for a time a distinct organization, only to become merged at last with the Conservatives. In each of these cases the readjustment did not take place at once, but was gradual, hesitating, and was not complete for a considerable period. The conditions most nearly resembling those now presented were at the close of the Napoleonic wars, when a formidable opposition did not develop for a number of years. Except for the brief ministry of "All the Talents" the Tories were in control throughout the war, and for fifteen years afterward. But differences of opinion gradually arose

among them which widened until the popular demand for parliamentary reform, and the adhesion of some of the former Tory leaders, brought the Whigs into power in 1830.

The Atrophy of Public Opinion

The continuation after the close of the World War of the abnormal conditions it had produced might have been foreseen. There was at the time of the armistice no organized party of opposition, and before a change could supervene Mr. Lloyd George adroitly prolonged those conditions by dissolving Parliament at once under the seductive, but hastily raised, cry that the Germans must pay the cost of the war, and their rulers be punished for their crimes. The general election was held too soon for the sentiments aroused by the war, and the popularity of the statesmen who had won it, to subside. There had not been time for opponents to gather strength, and the result was an overwhelming victory for the administration, with no opposition numerous, organized or consolidated enough to be formidable. For the moment no issue existed sufficiently pressing to create an opposition party, and no opposition party strong enough to create an issue with a

notable effect upon public opinion. The ordinary political mechanism for formulating the questions on which opinion is based had disappeared; and, in a country accustomed to rely upon two parties to present the issues for the consideration of the people, public opinion became to a great extent atrophied. Autocratic government continued, as it always must do when there is no concrete alternative thereto. One heard people constantly criticise the administration, saying that they had no confidence in it, but adding that there was nothing to put in its place, that the only choice lay between the existing coalition ministry and domination by the Labour Party, or absolute uncertainty. Even the representatives of the Labour Party were not themselves prepared to form a cabinet if a general election should yield a House of Commons so constituted as to give them a working majority. They realized that they were as yet too inexperienced to undertake the responsibility alone. If, therefore, the cabinet should fall the result was wholly uncertain. The probable outlook was a more or less chaotic state of politics, and in the prevailing tendency to strikes a possible outbreak of disturbances with which only an able, resolute and

united administration could cope. In this respect the condition has borne a faint resemblance to that of France at the plebiscites of Napoleon III, where the choice lay between an existing government, which, dislike it as one might, at least maintained order, and a leap in the dark. Under such conditions few people who are not extremists seek to overthrow the men in power. The cause of public sentiment in France at the time of the plebiscites of Napoleon III, and in England after the war, was the absence of a strong party of opposition with a definite alternative policy.

The extent to which public opinion in England was atrophied by the lack of a powerful opposition that could present an alternative policy has been illustrated by the state of the Irish question. In the midsummer of 1920 the Sinn Fein was steadily gaining ground. It was virtually taking over the administration of large parts of the country. It was setting up its secret tribunals which were superseding the royal courts of law. Outside of Ulster it was becoming more and more the controlling power. It was picking off those members of the Royal Irish Constabulary who had experience and knowledge enough to act as

eyes for Dublin Castle; but as yet the English government was not attempting seriously to assert its authority and overcome the movement by force. During this period Englishmen were surprisingly little stirred by the state of affairs across St. George's Channel. If asked why there was not more excitement about it the common answer was, either that with so many things to worry about one could not worry about them all, and just then the greatest source of anxiety was Mesopotamia; or else that people really did not know what ought to be done about Ireland. The great majority of the English appeared to believe that the conditions there were wrong, and that the bill prepared by the government for a common Irish Council and two separate Parliaments would not solve the difficulty. But there was a marked inability to formulate any other solution of the question. Then followed a reversal by the cabinet of its policy of inaction in Ireland. A course of vigorous repression was adopted, marked by the imprisonment of the Lord Mayor of Cork, by the pouring of troops into the island, and by the reprisals on the part of the Black and Tans. Finally, a year later, came the negotiations for peace on the basis of autonomy in the

nature of Dominion Home Rule. Never was there a better chance for a vigorous opposition. The policy of inaction, without a proposal likely to be satisfactory to the Irish people, could hardly be justified on any theory of the proper relation of Ireland to Great Britain. But if that policy was right, the policy of repression was wrong; or if this was right the policy of surrender and the offer of the Free State treaty was wrong, save on the principle that the attempt at repression had failed, and a failure of that kind could certainly have been treated by an opposition as evidence of blundering. But there was no effective opposition, and no concentration of adverse opinion capable of taking advantage of these changes of policy. A sentiment of disgust with the reprisals had no doubt been growing, and a negative public opinion was beginning to form against them; but the absence of a positive alternative gave Mr. Lloyd George an opportunity to make a sudden change of policy which, like the zigzag of a vessel avoiding a torpedo, enabled him to escape an explosion.

Such changes would not be possible in the face of a powerful opposition, because ministers cannot adopt the policy of their opponents without

resigning. They lose the respect of both sides too completely to continue in office. One of the most famous cases of this kind in English history is that of Sir Robert Peel, when, reversing his previous opinions, he made up his mind that the duties on corn must be repealed. His personal reputation was of the highest, and he acted from a stern sense of duty; but when he and his cabinet had reached the decision to favor the repeal he did in fact tender his resignation, and finally undertook to carry the measure through because the other party in the House of Commons did not succeed in forming a ministry. Yet in a few months the cabinet was defeated in the House and Peel resigned. He had broken his party to pieces, and wrecked its fortunes for nearly a generation. In small matters a ministry can, of course, adopt the views of their opponents. This has been called stealing their clothes while they are in bathing; but in large and stirring questions a radical change of direction is almost impossible when the opposition is vigorous.

One may cite, no doubt, the passage of the Reform Act by the Conservative ministry in 1867. But the situation was very peculiar. The Liberals, defeated by the opposition of the Con-

servatives and a number of their own members in their attempt to enact such a bill, had resigned; and Disraeli, seeing that a measure of this kind was inevitable and in the long run not disadvantageous to his party, determined, although in a minority in the House of Commons, to pass it. He did so by accepting amendments of a vital character from the other side of the House, greatly to the disgust of many of his followers. The proceeding would have been hopeless if the Liberals had not failed to agree among themselves on a plan; if, in fact, the two parties had not been for the time much disintegrated. For a similar reason the course of Mr. Lloyd George on Ireland would have been out of the question had not the formation of public opinion been checked by the condition of parties following the war.

To give other examples from English politics since the peace would involve the discussion of questions on which people would be likely to differ, but probably everyone will agree that the government reversed its policy more than once in regard to Ireland, and that, on the course which ought to be pursued there, any real public opinion in England was lacking during the crucial years

following the war. Anyone, indeed, who has watched the currents of British political thought since the armistice must have observed that the formation of opinions on public questions has been far less active than is customary among English-speaking peoples. The thing one missed was not a universal or general agreement on political matters, for that is not usual in a democracy where men may, and do, habitually differ. It was the absence of definite currents of popular thought strong and cohesive enough to bring one of them to a position of dominance that could control the conduct of affairs, and it is hardly an exaggeration to refer to the condition as one of atrophy, partial at least, of public opinion. The chief cause of this is not far to seek. No doubt something must be attributed to the disturbance of mind, and the lassitude of spirit, which succeeded the war and of which we shall have something to say later. But the principal cause is to be found in the absence of the instruments by which public opinion in England is habitually formed, that is the presence of powerful political parties formulating the alternatives between which the public must choose. The English people were in somewhat the position of a jury

without counsel to present the evidence in systematic order and argue their respective sides of the case. Under such conditions a jury would probably decide as the judge pleased. The position is in fact even more like that a jury would be in if there were no definite parties to the suit, in which case the jurymen would naturally be hopelessly confused about the whole matter. If it be true that all the public can ordinarily do is to choose between alternatives presented for the purpose, it is clear that when there are no alternatives the public cannot decide at all. Someone, or some body of men, powerful enough to secure a considerable following, must formulate a proposal, while some other body presents an alternative. Ordinarily this is done by the opposing political parties, but if either of them has disappeared, and no new one has yet taken its place, or if the two parties have coalesced, there is nothing for the public to do but to follow the single party in existence or remain passive. There may, of course, be many a small nucleus of definite opinion, but unless one of these gathers headway enough to challenge general attention there can be no public opinion on the subject with which it deals. The situation is the one already described

of many small paths in a roadless plain, or rather many little paths leading off from one main road, where however large the number of travellers who have no confidence that the path selected by the leader is the right one, they must follow it because they cannot agree on any other. Such a condition will not, of course, continue indefinitely in England. It may be brought to an end by the development of a strong opposition in Parliament or outside, but until that happens we shall have an illustration of the fact that without agencies for presenting alternatives for popular choice, public opinion upon a new question of policy cannot be formulated or expressed.

Direct Action a Result

The absence of a formidable opposition, and hence of political alternatives, tended on the one side to make the existing cabinet, and Mr. Lloyd George as its predominant member, well-nigh omnipotent; but it tended also to provoke among the discontented elements in the country a feeling of hopelessness about obtaining a change of policy by political means. Men may submit to a public opinion which they do not share, because it is useless to resist an obvious majority; or be-

cause of the belief that the majority must rule, with the hope that people may be brought to change their minds and the minority will in time prevail. But when a government is virtually autocratic, when from the lack of a choice between real alternatives the result of an election is not an obvious expression of popular preference, when there is no vigorous opposition advocating the views of a minority with a prospect of success, it is natural that discontented men should look to other means of obtaining what they desire. This happened in England after the close of the war. In September, 1919, the Trade Union Congress discussed the question of direct action by strikes, and in August, 1920, the Labour Council of Action made a threat that intervention against the Soviet government of Russia would be resisted by " any and every form of withdrawal of labour which circumstances may require." Fortunately no such action was ever taken, for it would have been a substitution of material force for orderly government and the due process of legislation. An appeal to force which prevails is likely to set a precedent that will be imitated for a long time to come. It directs the attention of discontented minorities to more rapid methods of obtaining their

objects than the slow process of creating public opinion in their favor. Minorities under despotisms, or what they believe to be such, resort to force because they see no other means of getting the things to which they conceive themselves entitled. There being no legitimate opposition, no alternative to the existing regime which can be publicly advocated with a chance of success, malcontents are tempted to resort to secret conspiracies and violence; and people who do this justify their conduct, not on the ground that a rule of violence is right, but that it is the only way to bring to an end a condition which misrepresents the nation's real aspirations, or what would be its real desires if it had a chance to form and express them. The strength of popular government rests upon the fact that the opinion of the people is always supposed to be known, and this cannot be the case unless loyal minorities as well as majorities openly advocate their views. That again involves not only the legal right to express opinions in opposition to the existing policy, but also the actual formulation and expression of such opinions wherever there is any considerable body of latent sentiment out of harmony with the government of the day.

There are, of course, treasonable and seditious expressions of opinion that are, and ought to be, punished by law; but they are such as propose resistance to the lawful authorities, not changes in the law to be brought about by constitutional proceedings. It is these last that citizens should be free to advocate. The wrong and the right way to deal with such questions are shown by two recent events in America. The New York Assembly made a grave blunder in 1920 in unseating the five Socialists elected to that body. The act implied that the ideas which those five men represented should not be expressed in the legislature in a constitutional form, and afterwards presented, if necessary, for a public verdict at an election, but could be advocated only by the sort of popular agitation which is dangerous from the very fact that it tends to seek its results by concealed means. In short the way to prevent secret revolutionary action in a democracy is to permit the objections to existing political principles to be openly put forward and accepted or rejected by a decisive expression of public opinion. This happened in the case of the police in Boston in 1919. They claimed the right to organize as a trade union and strike when dis-

satisfied with their treatment. They did strike, and Governor Coolidge, who declared that none of them ought ever to be taken back, was re-elected on this issue by the largest majority ever given to a candidate for that office in the Commonwealth. It was fortunate that his opponent based his appeal for votes on a demand for the reinstatement of the strikers, because this made the issue perfectly clear, with the result that the question, which had been agitated by the police of many American cities, was definitely set at rest for the whole country.

Resort to violent methods is particularly liable to occur after a war because the force of traditions that are generally considered axiomatic in a peaceful civilization is impaired. Although it is true that good men who serve in the army do not lose their regard for life, for the pursuits of peace and the refinements of civilization; yet it is also true that the habits of thought produced by war do not disappear altogether from the community, especially among men who had before the war began no too great respect for the usages of orderly social life. We hear much about the benefit of military training in imparting discipline, but soldiers disbanded after a war do not always

show an increase of self-control. In fact military discipline in time of war, by diminishing among enlisted men the habit of making decisions for themselves, sometimes has as much tendency to reduce as to increase the capacity for self-direction. Disbanded soldiers still acting as a crowd, but not as a military unit, have not always shown the highest desire for good order. This appears to have been notably the case in some of the countries defeated in the late war.

Materialist Reaction after War

If this be a paradox, many people may see another in the change of aspiration after war is over. During the struggle most men, whether in the military forces or not, are raised to a state of self-devotion above the ordinary. They are willing to sacrifice comforts, habits, desires and aims which in peace they would have considered paramount; and are ready to risk even life itself. Selfish motives give way before the overmastering sense of duty in the face of a vast national struggle. For the time men are filled with an exaltation of spirit in working for a cause far greater than themselves, and while the World War was in progress some enthusiastic people

believed that mankind would thereby be permanently lifted to a higher plane of life. To their deep chagrin the war was in fact followed by reaction to a materialism more pronounced than before. Workingmen also thought, and were encouraged to believe, that the end of the war would introduce a utopia for labor, but the passage of a couple of years brought instead reduction of wages, discontent and strikes. All this might have been foreseen for it is written large upon the pages of history. The French Revolution and the wars of Napoleon postponed political reform in England for more than a generation. The years that followed there were marked by some of the worst abuses of the factory system; while in France men's thoughts were turned to amassing wealth, and in Germany, Russia, Austria and Italy the Holy Alliance repressed all liberal aspirations until these slowly gathered force enough for a great explosion. The dreamers of moral progress after the American Civil War were rudely awakened by the Tweed Ring in New York.

If experience shows that a materialist reaction is apt to follow a great war the reason therefor may be found in the sudden change in the direc-

tion of attention. The soldier comes back from the army feeling that he has fulfilled his obligations to his country, and with a strong sense that his first duty is to provide for his family. The returning surgeon discovers that his practice has fallen into decay and he must rebuild it; the merchant, who has been serving his country in a civilian capacity during the struggle, perceives that to pick up the threads of his business involves strenuous work. In short all the men discharged find that their occupations, careers and fortunes sorely require attention. The same thing is true of the world at large. Its immediate need is to repair the enormous injuries suffered in the war, to supply the loss of things that have been consumed, or have not been produced, and for that purpose to restore the normal flow of industry and trade. This is always done at such a speed that it brings about later a state of depression. But the important thing to observe is that the direct effect of peace is to turn the attention of the individual and the public to material aims.

More important, however, for our purpose than the effect of material aims is the moral change that follows war. When the attention is

intensely fixed upon an object it becomes after a time wearied, and when the motive is relaxed it turns readily to something else. That is true of emotional as well as of physical attention. After Michael Angelo had finished his work upon the statue of the suffering slave, now in the Louvre, he carved upon the block of marble that supports it the face of a monkey. A strange shifting of mood from the sublime to the ridiculous one would say, and yet an artist understands the reaction after the strain. For the same reason a great moral effort is followed by moral lassitude, not necessarily with bad results, as in the case of the man out of whom was cast the evil spirit and to whom seven others worse returned; but, always there is a vacant house swept and garnished, and into it comes a revulsion to something not demanding a continuation of the former effort. This is true both of most individuals and of the community as a whole. It explains much of the public attitude since the war, and encourages the belief that, as the change that has taken place was natural and predictable, so the disappointing states of mind that have followed the war are the temporary results of a sudden revulsion of feeling and need not be of long duration.

CHAPTER VII

CHANGES OF DISPOSITION

Classification of Dispositions

That the French Revolution and the wars of Napoleon postponed parliamentary reform in England for more than a generation has already been observed. The reasons for this are worth considering; but before doing so it is necessary to glance at the normal classification of opinions.

On the basis of their temperament, disposition or customary tendency of thought men may be classified in various ways. A political grouping often mentioned is into those who prize most highly liberty or progress on the one hand, and those who care more for order on the other. But such a division is not logical. When a revolt takes place against an outworn despotism the desire for liberty and progress may well be enlisted on one side and the defense of established order on the other; but under normal conditions such an antithesis does not exist. For liberty and progress the door may, indeed, be opened by a

destructive insurrection, yet they can be maintained and flourish only in a well-ordered community; in one where the degree of order is such that men can lay their plans with some confidence in the future, and calculate the result of their actions. The liberty of armed bands of brigands looting a country, the strife of fierce revolutionary bodies contending for the control of a state, mean neither liberty nor progress for the vast majority of the people. In such cases those who want these blessings must seek first of all to reestablish order. Liberty and progress, therefore, are not inconsistent with order. The two conceptions are not mutually contradictory; they are not logical alternatives.

Nor when a political division on these lines arises has it any certainty of permanence. Macaulay in his second essay on the Earl of Chatham declares that by the middle of the eighteenth century the Whigs and Tories had exchanged their positions as the advocates of the principles of liberty on one side and order on the other. Their views about the church, about the monarchy, about political principles in general had not yet been profoundly altered, but the upper had become the under dog and cried out for

liberty, while its opponent was eager to enforce order. A more recent example is that of Herbert Spencer in his condemnation of what he called the new toryism. By this he meant the departure of the radicals in the latter half of the nineteenth century from the doctrine of *laissez faire*, which had been the creed of the old school of radicals fifty years earlier, and which Spencer himself believed to be synonymous with progress. For more than a generation now the main demand of radicals has been not for liberty, but for governmental regulation, that is for progress through an established order that limits freedom in the management of industry. Extreme radicals attack the Constitution of the United States on the ground that it protects the liberty of the capitalists against legislation designed to improve the conditions of labor. In short the demand of Radicals for liberty and the Conservatives for order has been in part reversed.*

* In his recent book on *The Spirit of the Common Law* (pp. 28–31) Dean Pound points out that the change from status to contract, proclaimed by Sir Henry Maine, and commonly accepted a generation ago, as the direction of advance in civilization, is by no means a continuous process; and that the tendency of the law in England and America today is distinctly toward regulating relations among men on the basis of status.

A classification of dispositions into a preference for liberty and progress on one side, and for order on the other, is therefore neither logical nor constantly applicable in fact. A more logical division, and one of more general application may be suggested. We may divide people into those who are fairly content with existing conditions and those who are not, and to represent the matter graphically we may draw a horizontal line placing those who are contented above it and those who are discontented below, thus:

CONTENTED

DISCONTENTED

Practically it might be difficult to sort out people in this way, because on general biological principles, a few would be far from the line on one side or the other, while the greater part, not being markedly contented or discontented, would be massed near the line itself. But as our object is merely a logical division between the two tendencies the biological distribution need not for the moment be considered. We shall refer to it later. There is, however, another difficulty in so classifying people, arising from the fact that a man may be contented about one subject and

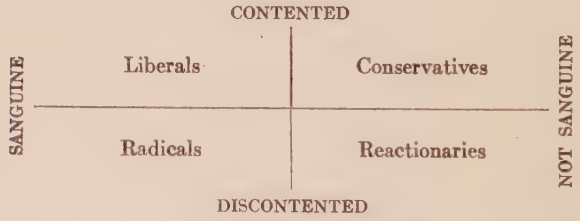
very discontented about another. A merchant, for example, may be highly satisfied with the condition of business, with the men engaged in it, and with its prospects; and yet he may be profoundly disgusted with the state of politics or education. One may be quite convinced that materially the world is on the whole very good and growing better, but that literature and art are sinking into hopeless decay. Mr. William Jennings Bryan is known throughout the country as a radical in politics and a conservative in religion; St. Paul, after his conversion, seems in each respect to have been the opposite. The validity of the logical division into contented and discontented is not, however, affected by the fact that men's attitude toward all subjects is not the same, provided we apply it at any one time only to the particular subject under consideration.

Suppose we now divide people in a similar way into those who are sanguine about improvement and those who are not. This line is obviously not the same as the other, for a man who is contented with things as they are may be sanguine about the future, or he may not; and one who is discontented may or may not look for improve-

ment. Let us therefore represent the division between these two classes by a vertical line thus:

SANGUINE | NOT SANGUINE

Then if we combine the two methods of classification we have two cross divisions dividing people into four groups: those who are discontented with present conditions and sanguine about improvement, whom we may call Radicals; those who are contented and sanguine, whom we may class as Liberals; those who are contented but not hopeful of improvement, who are evidently Conservatives; and finally those who are not content with existing conditions and at the same time see no prospect of better things to come. These last we may describe as Reactionaries, for anyone who thinks the world is bad and getting worse is almost certain to believe that it was better in the past.*



* Mr. Walter Lippmann in his book *Public Opinion* (p. 416, n. 2) remarks, "Not all, but some of the differences between

Let us remember that we are using these terms precisely in the sense we have defined; because, like all words popularly current, they are commonly applied very vaguely and often abused to imply general moral approbation or disapproval of people with whose ideas we do not agree. Men are apt to attribute extreme views to their opponents, the conservative regarding the liberal as a dangerous radical, and the liberal or radical calling a man of more conservative views a reactionary. In discussing types of thought for philosophic purposes we must maintain a scientific attitude, for if by reason of our own fancied position we allow ourselves to attach moral significance to different normal dispositions we can reach no reliable conclusions. For the purpose of our discussion, we can use accurately the terms employed above in the sense attributed to them, provided we adhere strictly to the definitions given to them. Radicals often think that radicalism consists in holding certain doctrines, which were no doubt radical when first accepted

reactionaries, conservatives, liberals and radicals are due, I think, to a different intuitive estimate of the rate of change in social affairs." That is a very interesting observation which would probably be found in harmony with the classification proposed here.

by them, but may in time have ceased to be so. These doctrines may have passed into the conservative class without its being recognized, while others of quite a different character are being advanced by the pioneers. So strong is the connection between particular doctrines and a supposed attitude of mind that one occasionally hears a proposal objected to as reactionary on the ground that it violates an unbroken liberal tradition. In such a case it should rather be called iconoclastic. People sometimes speak of conservatives as liking things simply because they are old, and objecting to any innovation because it is new. One might equally well say that radicals are attracted by new ideas, not because they are true, but simply because they are new. The writer was discussing with a student some years ago the merits of a proposed political reform, pointing out its probable defects, when the student exclaimed that things were now so bad something must be done. The real difference between the radical and the conservative attitudes goes much deeper than the superficial like or dislike of things because they are new or old. The youth and the radical tend to compare actual conditions with ideal ones; the conservative tends

to compare them with something worse. The young man, or the radical with a youthful mind, constructs an imaginary system; while experience, or close study, teaches that human relations depend upon a vast and delicate adjustment of forces; that society is an organic structure where any change may cause other changes until a new balance is reached; and that a structure of this kind is more easily dislocated than created. Such a conviction is, indeed, often carried by conservatives so far as to cause a dread of any change. Having learned the intricate nature of the organism they dislike to disturb it. The liberal who stands between these two temperaments is ready to change, but only by building upon, or modifying without destroying, those things that have been painfully built up in the past.

Tendencies to Change

This fourfold classification of men's natural dispositions accords with the common usage in describing diversities of temperanent. Röhmer in his *Lehre von den Politischen Parteien* took it as the basis for his analysis of political divisions. Youths he thought were by nature radical; men in younger middle life liberal; those in older

middle life conservative; and old men reactionary. Of course he did not imagine that the temperament was always governed by the number of years since birth. Some men are born old, and some, however long they have lived, die young. He used the four ages of man as four types of mental disposition which he conceived as associated with the qualities characteristic of those ages, and he believed that there was on the average a normal tendency to move from one to another of these four classes in the order indicated. In short, he thought that as men advance in years there is a natural progress from the left hand lower corner of our diagram around it in the direction of the hands of a clock. There is doubtless some truth in this, although it is only a tendency, rarely carried out completely, and often checked, or even reversed, by counter currents.

In considering the changes of disposition that men undergo it may be observed that almost never do they move directly from any quarter of the diagram to the one diagonally opposite to it. A radical almost never becomes a conservative, or a liberal a reactionary, without going through one of the other phases as an intermediate stage. The reason is that for a radical to become a con-

servative, for example, he must reverse at once two elements of his disposition. From being discontented he must become contented, and having been sanguine in temperament he must lose his hopefulness, two changes that are very unlikely to take place at the same time. Men, therefore, rarely move at one stroke to the part of the diagram diagonally opposite, but they may, and in fact do, move to either of the quarters next to them, movements in some directions being, of course, more common than in others. Perhaps the most marked, or at least the most common, tendency as men grow older is to become less sanguine. When they are young the world seems to them plastic, everything they dream of appears possible of attainment; but after failures, after experiencing the stubborn resistance of things as they are, they discover that the changes they desired are more difficult to make than they had supposed. If they do not become actually discouraged, they learn that progress must be slow. This tends to turn the liberal towards a more conservative position, and sometimes the early radical is found late in life to be a reactionary, — although he rarely knows it. If he remains discontented; if he goes so far as to think

that the efforts at improvement have failed, and that a bad world has grown worse; he may be inclined to believe that it was better in the past and have little hope in the future. That is the very definition of a reactionary.

Another common tendency as men grow older is to become more contented. At first sight this may seem strange and at variance with the tendency to become less sanguine, yet it is a fact of observation. It is, of course, not true of the reactionary, but he was usually old when he became one. He is often a conservative who has become discontented, and being old he is not likely to change. The occasional young reactionary is, curiously enough, as a rule personally well off. He is the type of the half genuine, half sham, pessimist or cynic, who sits at ease and takes a melancholy pleasure in watching the world go wrong. *Non ragionam di lor, ma guarda e passa.* Young radicals, on the other hand, at least those among them who have the force to count in the formation of public opinion, are likely to prosper in worldly affairs, and hence to become more contented with their personal situation. This in itself tends to make them less bitter about the prevailing conditions of life. They are likely also to

attain in some degree the objects they are striving for, which renders them less discontented; and in the case of those things that they cannot accomplish they are apt to perceive the cause of the difficulties, ascribing them less than before to obstinate perversity. In fact their discontent is usually modified sooner than their sanguine temperament is lost, and therefore they become liberal much more frequently than reactionary.

If this sketch of tendencies to change is correct, the normal, or more properly the ordinary, movement is for the radical to change to a liberal, the liberal to a conservative, and not infrequently, if soured, the conservative to a reactionary. That is the significance of Röhmer's four ages of temperament. It is the meaning also of Judge Story's reputed saying, embodying his personal experience, that a man ought to be a Democrat when young and a Whig in later life. Sometimes a man's attitude develops in the opposite direction, and there have been famous cases of it, but because it is abnormal there is some prejudice against one who becomes more radical as he grows older. People do not feel sure where he will go, or what he will take up next.

On the continent of Europe political parties,

like individuals, tend to move around the diagram in the direction of the hands of a clock. In England and the United States, where two great parties have had a continuous life, this is not self-evident, because each of them is constantly recruited from new elements, and adopting new policies, which counteract or conceal the tendency; but in the British House of Lords it is very marked. Although the number of Liberals who have been created peers is very large, the temper of the House constantly remains overwhelmingly Conservative, for the sons and grandsons of Liberal peers tend strongly to assume a different disposition. It is in fact this tendency that keeps the body out of touch with the newer impulses moving through the public, thus reducing its influence and making it unpopular. The tendency may be seen very strikingly in some of the continental countries. In Switzerland, for example, the Radical Party has long ceased to be radical. There has, indeed, been a procession whereby the Centre or Conservative-Liberals have nearly passed off the stage, the Liberals have become highly conservative, and the Radicals form the middle group. The same phenomenon may be observed in other nations. In fact

in those countries where, instead of two great parties one in power and the other in opposition, the political division is into a number of groups —not based on questions of race or religion which involve quite a different attitude — there is a drift of these groups to the right, that is toward the conservative side of the chamber. New groups, more radical than their predecessors have come to be, are formed at the extreme left, to drift in their turn nearer the centre. Since these new radicals cannot take the name already used they invent a new one, and of late years they have called themselves Socialists. In France the old monarchical Right has almost disappeared, the group that called, and considered, themselves Radicals have become distinctly conservative and even many of the Socialists are far from being very radical. It may be observed that Clemenceau began his career as an ultra Radical, while Millerand and Briand not many years ago called themselves Socialists, and that on the extreme Left a group has appeared that calls itself Communist. In Germany before the war the Socialists had in great part ceased to be really socialistic and been transformed into a party of protest against the dominant militarist policy.

After the revolution, indeed, that followed the close of the war, the bulk of the Socialists showed themselves quite out of sympathy with the principles of the early founders of the party.

The drift to the right is caused in part, but only in part, by the fact that the more radical groups have secured the changes which they were formed to bring about, and are content with what they have accomplished. In part it is due also to the same causes which tend to affect individuals as they grow older. In other words the groups at the left carry out their doctrines to some extent, and to some extent outgrow them. They become less discontented, especially if by attaining office they find themselves in a measure responsible for existing conditions; and by discovering the obstacles to change they grow less sanguine about overcoming them. The Radical groups become Liberal and the Liberal ones Conservative. Half a century hence the name Socialist, which has already changed its meaning in continental Europe from a dangerous, if not revolutionary, movement to a vague indication of desire for reform, may come to designate those people who have an instinctive aversion to innovations.

Preponderance of Different Dispositions

For two reasons the attempt we have made at a graphic representation of dispositions is, when applied to political tendencies, inaccurate. While perfectly logical for any one subject, it can, as already pointed out, be applied only to one subject at a time, whereas politics deal with many subjects, and to portray all the various factors that arise, it would be necessary to use, instead of a plane and two straight lines, a figure of three or more dimensions cut by curving planes, wholly incapable of visual representation. In the second place the lines are, in reality, continually in motion. Human thought and especially collective thought is not a problem of statics. It is forever in process of change. The important matter is not what people think, but what they are tending to think; not so much their attitude toward a matter about to be presented to them, as what they will think after it has been presented to them; not their judgment upon an act about to be performed, but what it will be when it has been performed. Therein lies one of the natural defects of an election or popular vote. It

is an attempt to take a snap shot of public opinion at a particular moment, whereas that opinion was not exactly the same the day before, and will not be the day after. Moreover some people, in casting their ballots, form their opinion on the facts as they were sometime before; others on what they think the facts will be sometime in the future; while no one knows precisely what they are at the moment. In spite, however, of these defects, graphic representations may help us to clarify a little our ideas.

So far we have made only a qualitative use of the figures in order to classify different kinds of disposition, and point out a tendency of change from one to another. Let us now try a quantitative method, that is let us see if we can get any light by representing the proportion of people at any one time who possess each of these dispositions. For that purpose let us draw a circle that shall be taken to include all the people in the community. Obviously the intersection of the two lines will not ordinarily be at the centre of the circle, for if it were it would mean that the four groups of dispositions are exactly equal in size. The intersection may be above or below the

centre and on either side of it. Four typical cases may be represented thus:*

STABLE

UNSTABLE

PROGRESSIVE

UNPROGRESSIVE

In the first of these figures by far the greater part of the people belong to the moderate groups of disposition and opinion, while the men of extreme views are comparatively few, and therefore exert little influence. When this is the case revolutionary or violent proposals have small chance of success. The condition is essentially stable, and power oscillates between the Liberals and Conservatives as the vertical line shifts from time to time to the right or the left. This was the general situation in England from the reform of the House of Commons in 1832 to the outbreak of the World War.

* In these figures the distance of the intersection of the lines from the centre of the circle is much exaggerated, for in fact people are more thickly grouped not far from the intersection of the lines of cleavage than near the circumference of the circle, and therefore a very slight shifting of the lines will make a large difference in the preponderance of disposition and opinion. But for graphic purposes the size of the space indicates to the eye the number of people within it.

In the second figure most of the people are radical or reactionary, discontented with the existing political or social condition, but profoundly at variance about what they want in its place; while the men who are on the whole fairly satisfied with the general situation, and want only moderate changes, if any, are comparatively powerless. In such a state of opinion a shift of the vertical line to the right, increasing the proportion of radicals, is liable to produce disturbance; a shift to the left a return to autocratic rule. In fact each of these results is apt to make recruits for the opposite group, and thus cause an oscillation from one extreme to the other. That condition, which is obviously unstable, was traditional in France from the fall of Napoleon until the Third Republic had been in existence long enough to be recognized by nearly everyone as permanent. If a date is needed let us say until the defeat of Boulanger in 1889.

The third and fourth figures require no detailed explanation. If the great majority of a people are liberal or radical, that is, sanguine about the desire for change, while many of them ardently desire it, changes will certainly come, the only question being how rapid and how ex-

tensive they will be. If on the other hand the majority are strongly disinclined to change, it will not come so long as that disposition lasts. In France, again we may see examples of these two figures, the former at the time of the revolutions of 1789, 1830, and 1848, the latter most markedly when Napoleon III raised himself to the imperial throne. But in France it is unsafe to talk of the majority of the people in those days; one can only speak of the disposition of the political forces predominant at any moment, and this during revolts was often little more than the mob of Paris.

The last remark suggests a caution against confounding popular dispositions with political parties. Sometimes the parties are largely based upon these differences of disposition, and sometimes the two have little connection, the parties being divided by racial, sectional, religious, commercial or industrial questions. During the nineteenth century in England, and to a great extent in other European countries, the differences of disposition were closely related to the party groupings. People have at times tried to apply the same analysis to politics in the United States, seeking to identify one of the two great parties

with liberal and the other with conservative tendencies; but without much success, as Lord Bryce has pointed out in his *American Commonwealth*.* Parties in the United States are based far more on sectional, industrial and other motives than on a general disposition to favor or oppose change: a condition promoted by the fact already observed that the parties there are more directly concerned with persons than policies, the members often differing among themselves on the concrete questions that arise. Nevertheless differences of disposition exist among the people, affecting opinion and often influencing both legislation and the administration of public affairs, although by no means always on party lines.

The After-effects of War

A war that does not call forth all the energy and resources of a country may have the effect of stimulating industrial and political movement by loosening the grip of tradition and turning atten-

* Chap. LIII where he says, "There may seem to be more in the character and temper of the Republicans than of the Democrats that leans toward State interference. But when the question arises in a concrete instance neither party is much more likely than the other to oppose such interference."

tion into new channels. This seems to have been the result in the United States of the war with England in 1812. On the other hand a war on a scale that demands all the resources of a nation, that entails a mighty and exhausting effort on the part of its people, may be followed, even during a time of great industrial progress, by political conservatism extending over a considerable period. This was true everywhere in Europe after the wars of Napoleon. In England reform of the House of Commons, which had been advocated before the French Revolution, and had there been no wars might have come before the close of the eighteenth century, was delayed until 1832. Reaction prevailed in France, while Central and Eastern Europe long remained under the stagnating domination of the Holy Alliance. Although it is yet far too early for any accurate historical estimate of the after-effects of the World War, the course of events in the different countries furnishes already ample material for reflection.

Certain facts stand out clearly enough. In every one of the defeated countries, except Bulgaria, there has been a revolution that has over-

turned the form of government.* Among these countries Russia is properly included; for although during the first half of the war she was one of the Allies and their arms ultimately prevailed, yet she was beaten, underwent her revolution and made her peace with Germany before the victory of her former associates. On the other hand there has been no revolutionary change in the form of government of any of the countries that came out of the war victorious. Now the revolutions in the defeated countries meant that the radical elements obtained control, but save in Russia where dissent has been suppressed by force, they have usually encountered a reactionary opposition that does not appear to lose in strength. The newly formed nations, like Poland and Czecho-Slovakia, are hard to classify, for they are in an anomalous position, and can hardly be grouped either with the victors or the vanquished. They were reluctantly compelled to fight on the side of the latter, although after the war they were treated as victors. But recent history in Hungary and Germany is typical. In Hungary the moderate re-

* Of Turkey it is difficult to speak in terms applicable to European nations.

publican ministry of Karolyi was quickly succeeded by the soviet rule of Bela Kun, and this was soon followed by a vigorous reaction with a strong desire to restore the monarchy. In Germany the republican government, which represents the less extreme elements in the state, has little enthusiastic popular support, and is striving to maintain itself on one side against the more radical socialists and on the other against the reactionary monarchists who, so we are told, are at present steadily gaining adherents.

The conflict between extreme views with a tendency on the whole of the radicals to lose ground may be seen also in the victorious nations. It has been very marked in Italy, where immediately after the war the socialistic and revolutionary movements displayed great strength. For a time they seized and controlled factories, defying the government which seemed powerless to resist them. But their opponents quickly organized under the name of Fascisti, overcame them by force, carried violence far and wide, until they have become the strongest power in the state. In France, where the general attitude of the public mind finds a better expression in elections than it does in Italy, the Socialists suffered a consider-

able defeat at the polls, and, in spite of the existence of a body with extremely radical views, the country is on the whole more conservative than before the war. The same thing is true of England. Since the war there have been many strikes, among the most notable being that of the National Union of Railwaymen in the autumn of 1919, who had hoped, through the manifold inconveniences, paralysis of industry and scarcity of food caused thereby, to bring the public to their terms; but the government and the people were resolute, and this dangerous strike was soon unsuccessful. Later came the great coal strike in 1921 which in its turn did not succeed in attaining what the miners sought. Such events show a condition of unrest, caused in great part, no doubt, by the disturbance in industry, trade and prices; but due also in part to the restless state of mind following the war, to a clash of widely differing views, with a preponderance of the more conservative tendencies. About English politics it is difficult to speak with certainty because their course has not yet returned to its normal channel, but it is safe to assert that the Conservatives have more influence than for a dozen years preceding the war.

In the United States also strikes have occurred on a large scale accompanied in some cases by unusual violence; and, what is more directly significant for our purpose, extremes of disposition and opinion have been strangely prominent. Never for nearly half a century has political animosity been more acute, the repugnance of mutually hostile ideas been so intense, or the intolerance of opposing views been so pronounced, as since the war. In many ways, in various forms, in different parts of the country, radical ideas and conservative resistance have made themselves felt in politics, in religion and in education, with the conservative sentiment generally predominant.

The manifestation almost everywhere in the belligerent countries of thought and emotion running to extremes, the radical at first prevailing in the vanquished nations, and losing ground generally in the victorious ones, with on the whole a growing conservative tendency in both; all this with the well-nigh universal unrest is not an accident. It must be due to some general cause, a natural after-effect of the gigantic struggle the world has undergone. At the close of an exhausting war the victorious peoples who

have fully achieved their objects do not want to remain a military camp, throwing their main strength into the maintenance of armed forces. They desire to take up again the ways of civil life. But these have been greatly changed by the exigencies of the struggle. The old methods of industry have been dislocated by being turned into different channels, and the reversion to the former ways does not take place easily. The relations of demand and supply have been affected, in commodities of all kinds by the shortage of things whose production has been impeded by the war, and in labor by the disbanding of millions of soldiers. Prices and wages have risen above the usual level and neither can be suddenly reduced,—a difficulty increased by the fact that a great modern war is conducted by borrowing and by large issues of paper money which cause inflation. After a short period of activity to restore a part of the material damage done, the process of readjustment brings a severe industrial depression that involves distress among all classes. It is natural therefore that the after-effect of war should be an increase in the proportion of the discontented as compared with those who are fairly satisfied with the existing situa-

tion, so that the mental attitude of men may be expressed thus:

The effect of strained industrial conditions is enhanced by the relaxation of moral effort, the lassitude that leaves men irritable and unconciliatory. People have also acquired the habit of driving hard for an end regardless of obstacles. Hence they tend to go to extremes. This is shown by a readiness to resort to violent measures, a frequency of outbreaks of disorder, a disregard of life that would have been incomprehensible before the war. No doubt the far more general possession of firearms, and the habit of using them, accounts for something; but the temper of mind, the loss of repugnance to homicide among the rougher youths, counts for more. Something of the strange state of feeling may be seen in the fact that while people are distinctly less shocked by crimes of violence and by killing in conflicts than before, there seems to be almost as much aversion as ever to execution for homicide by regular judicial process.

Moreover the weakening of traditions by a vast war tends to break down the former methods of thought, the habits of mutual forbearance, the old amenities that soften life. Men think on unaccustomed lines, and this fosters the extreme rather than the conventional, and therefore moderate, attitudes of mind. The first effect at the close of such a war is a contrast between autocratic ideas on one hand and radical impulses on the other; and thus there is promoted that much-discussed contest between the principles of order and of progress.

If all this happens in the victorious nations it occurs with greater force in the defeated ones where the reasons for discontent are far stronger. Here the political institutions have no record of success to exalt them. On the contrary the disaster may be laid to their charge, and hence the radical, and even revolutionary, elements are not unlikely for a time to obtain control. In the victorious countries the discontent is not inclined to take a subversive political character, because the very fact of having won the war covers a multitude of mistakes and imperfections. At most it causes a change of the persons or party in power, not an overturn of the form of government. But

soon a conservative sentiment is likely to arise. Allusion has already been made to the materialism that follows an exhausting war; to the turning of attention to personal affairs; and to the feeling of those who have thrown their energies into the struggle that they have done their share. Men's thoughts are engaged in business, and everyone so engaged, whether in times of prosperity or depression, dreads the readjustments caused by change. This attitude is strengthened by the habit, acquired during the war, of submitting to authority, which is the essence of conservatism; and in fact, as a shrewd observer has remarked to the writer, the habit in the United States of following directions has lessened initiative in public matters.

Nor must we forget the deadening force of disillusionment. Neither soldiers nor civilians long carry on a terrific war, and bear all the sufferings it involves, without the enthusiasm of a glowing faith. They are sacrificing all that they hold dear for a great and noble purpose. They tell themselves that their country, that mankind, will hereafter live upon a higher plane for what they have endured; that they are fighting for human freedom, for a better world, for a world where

wars shall be no more. But when the guns are silent, when peace returns and with it the light of common day, not all that they hoped for comes. What they most longed for may be lost. They find that it takes more wisdom to make peace than war. A feeling grows with some men that plans for human progress are in vain, with others that they are hopeless for the time. Thus many liberals tend to lose their sanguine temper and drift into the ranks of the conservatives.

Although at such a time strong opposition to all change exists, there is always an opportunity for real improvement. Unusual conditions give a chance for good or evil to those who know the way to seize them. A situation not wholly different from that described faced the American States in the dark years following the Revolutionary War, with inefficiency, confusion and disturbance everywhere. In Massachusetts the radical elements broke into violence in Shays' Rebellion, which was suppressed by force; and yet amid the disorders of the time the Constitution of the United States was framed. The very conditions made it possible, for as John Quincy Adams declared, it was wrung from the grinding necessity of a reluctant people. Now we are told

that it was drawn by conservatives in their own interests, but whether this be true or not it was a monument of progress. It made the United States a nation, and no one today, however conservative or radical he may be, would prefer that its adoption should have failed.